Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick Library
BS2777 .G5
Glasgow, Samuel McPheeters. MAIN
The general epistles : studies in the le
3 9967 00116 7076

AUGUSTANA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SCRIPTURA SACRA
SOLA FIDE
ILLINOIS
Ex Libris

LIBRARY

Date Due

SEMINARY
LIBRARY

THE GENERAL EPISTLES

91,489

AUGUSTANA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY ROCK ISLAND ILLINOIS

Brief Book Studies

The General Epistles

STUDIES IN THE LETTERS OF JAMES, PETER JOHN AND JUDE

By
SAMUEL McPHEETERS GLASGOW, D.D.
Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, Tenn.
Author of "Border Trails," "The Frontier," etc.

NEW YORK CHICAGO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Copyright, MCMXXVIII, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

BS
2777
.G5

The Bible Text used herein is the American Standard Revision, copyright 1901, by Thomas Nelson and Sons, and it is used by permission.

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 851 Cass Street
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 99 George Street

To those who
Love and Live the Faith
Once for all delivered to the Saints.

Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

—Psalms 119:18.

Then opened he their mind that they might understand the scriptures.

—Luke 24:45.

FOREWORD

If one may be allowed the alliteration, we want to make this volume popular because it shall be practical and pungent. The ultimate objective of the study is the sensing of the controlling current of the Bible book and the directing of this impact on the student's mind and heart in such a way that it shall not only be possible for him to remember something about the book, but that it shall be impossible for him to forget the strong central surge of its truth. In this book-study method, while there will be intensive discussion of many of the detailed teachings of the Book, we want the main emphasis always to rest upon the central theme and thought.

One of the purposes of Bible book-study is to supplant the method of "scrappy" and desultory teaching of the Bible with a thoughtful and clear understanding of what was in the author's mind and heart when, under the control of the Holy Spirit, he wrote his message. Under such a method the gem verses and passages with which we are already familiar take on an added lustre, and flash forth a deeper and richer truth than ever before; and hitherto isolated motto texts become pregnant with a new meaning as they are placed in their proper setting.

We should bring our best thinking and reasoning capacities to the world's greatest Book, God's reve-

lation of Himself, of man, and of the Great Reconciliation.

The author of these simple studies would suggest that you have a regular time and, as far as possible, a regular place for your personal study of the Great Book. When entering upon the study of a specific book—for example, James—make up your mind to master some things about James.

Have a set purpose that when you lay down James after completing this study, there shall be forever yours some unforgettable primary facts about the book and its content. Read James daily. Read it chapter by chapter. Read it as a whole. Have a keen eye for key words or phrases. Note practical subjects treated and try to reproduce from memory what he said about these subjects. A study is a study, not a picnic.

Demand from your mind in studying James that it give you the same sort of service which it used to give you when you studied History or Latin. You made demands on it, and it met those demands. You filled your mind with facts and trusted it, and it reproduced those facts when you needed them.

Strangely enough, we have not followed this same simple, sane method in Bible study; but seem to think its mighty truths will get into our minds and hearts by some mysterious, pious absorption without any thoughtful and sustained effort on our part.

Remember, however, that the Bible admits that it is a peculiar Book. It declares that natural brilliancy cannot fathom its spiritual revelations. What a pa-

thetic tragedy it is to do homage with our minds to non-spiritual men as they comment upon and claim to interpret a Book which by its own statement is "spiritually discerned." One might just as well rest his belief about the sun's wondrous light upon a report made by a blind man who went forth with a lantern to examine it at noon. So far as the author is concerned, he would rather have the report of the most uncultured of men who had good eyesight, than that of the most learned blind savant in the world with all his lanterns of human knowledge.

We get out of every study just in proportion as we put time and effort into it. If you can command but a brief time daily make it account to you with some permanent acquisition. Every wise student of the Great Book will remember always that the Holy Spirit of God is not only a Teacher (John 14:26) of the Bible, but that He is the Only Teacher (1 Corinthians 2:12-14) of the Book of books, and that without Him in all our search for spiritual truth we can do nothing. When you open the Book, ask the Spirit to open your heart (Psalm 119:18).

S. M. G.

Knoxville, Tennessee.

CONTENTS

I. The Analytical Book Method 13

II. The Epistle of James 15

III. The First Epistle of Peter 46

IV. The Second Epistle of Peter 79

V. The First Epistle of John 107

VI. The Second Epistle of John 149

VII. The Third Epistle of John 154

VIII. The Epistle of Jude 161

I

THE ANALYTICAL BOOK METHOD

As EVERY Bible student knows, there are many methods of Bible study, and each will yield its own peculiar richness.

There is the topical method, in which the vital subjects treated in Scripture are followed throughout the whole Book, thus bringing all the light of the revelation upon the subject studied.

There is the synthetical method. In this, remote and apparently disassociated passages are shown to blend together into the establishing of great spiritual truths, each passage having its place in forming the completed body of truth to be presented.

There is also the exegetical method, which uses the original Hebrew or Greek, or the English in varying translations, to bring to the surface the finer shades of meaning that may be hidden from the casual eye. In this method we seek to draw out the gems that are beneath the surface and thus to read between the lines of the revelation.

There is the book method. In this the Bible is studied by the several books, and each book is searched for its own distinctive message and its full spiritual content.

Then there is the analytical book method. We have

chosen this method, because in it we study the Bible by book units. Discovery is made of the natural movement in the book. The central theme of the book is precipitated under this method, and is made to gather up in its statement the heart of the whole book. We go further, and break up the book under the theme, guided by the movement, into its logical component parts. Thus we lay bare the skeleton of the book and then proceed to build the symmetrical body thereon.

This method has its own distinctive advantages. The unity of the Book is jealously preserved and continually presented. Memory is vastly encouraged and aided by an analysis, every part of which moves evidently towards the central theme. Simple, illuminating comment on the divisions studied under the analysis brings home the demanding messages of the Book and puts the spiritual glow on the study. The analysis serves as a system of pegs on which to hang the great, natural, logical divisions. With the theme and the analysis mastered, the student finds the residuum of spiritual riches retained by him and the permanent impact of the spiritual movement, both definitely enlarged.

This method is used in preparing this study for the average Bible reader with limited time at his disposal. No study, however, can be made profitable, and its issues permanent, where there is not intentional and earnest application on the part of the student. If the student will master the theme and outline, it will inevitably give direction and tone to all the detail study.

II

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

STUDY I

The General Epistles are Peter (I and II), John (I, II, and III), James and Jude. It has been suggested that Peter is the apostle who speaks of hope. John tells us of love. Jude, the brother of our Lord, writes of the faith. James, the brother of our Lord, treats of works.

It sets the atmosphere for the study of this particular epistle, if we think of James as having been the brother and boyhood playmate of our Lord. The author of this singularly practical and striking epistle knew Jesus when He was a boy, and grew up in the same home with Him. In Christ's early ministry James did not believe on Him, but after the consummation of His passion we see that James fully accepted the Deity and Lordship of his earthly brother, Jesus.

The book of James is:

A DEMAND FOR REALITY

He pitilessly pushes through obstructing and confusing form and ceremony. He tears away the veneer of empty profession or pious claim and is only satis-

fied with the real spiritual status and fact. Nothing is final but truth. "Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right." This is not a doctrinal epistle only or mainly, but an epistle of deeds. We well know, however, that doctrine and deeds are interdependent. True deeds are dependent upon true doctrines, and true doctrine always fruits out into true deeds. What we believe determines what we are and what we do.

The Jews of the Dispersion to whom the epistle was written were under persecution and intense suffering. They were, therefore, sorely tempted to fall into the snare of discarding the simple faith and turning in their time of dire need to the old ritual appeal, with its externalities and formalities. This epistle is a call to:

APPLIED CHRISTIANITY

James says in effect: "If Christianity cannot produce the solution of the actual and deepest needs of man after a fair and real trial, then let us refuse it, discard it, and secure a faith that can produce the solution." The epistle of James sounds the doom of a dead orthodoxy. It marks the frank and full testing of the faith. James wants to know this: Does the faith of Christ produce the life of righteousness toward God and toward man?

James steps out of the mysterious, the mystical and the misty realm of theory only, and subjects Christianity to many palpable, final testings, and he is quite willing to abide by the issues of the investigation.

James believes loyalty to God is evidenced by and always issues in love for God, love for God's men, and love for God's interests.

The theme of the epistle is:

TRUE FAITH IN GOD PRODUCES TRUE FOLLOWING OF GOD

With James this above stated theme is cause and effect. Given the cause, he shows that the effect will follow. Discovering the effect, he declares it necessitates the existence of the cause.

Before the next study, please read the short epistle of James at least twice. Read it once chapter by chapter, noting the headings at the top of the chapters or at the top of the page. Then read it as a whole, straight through. The oftener you can find time to read it, the more intelligently you will enter the study. If you have access to the American Revised Version, it will be helpful for you to use it in your study.

STUDY II

In our last study we learned that the author of this practical epistle was the brother of our Lord. We noted that the drive of this book is a demand for reality, and we found that those to whom the book was written were the Jews of the Dispersion, who were under dire and testing persecution.

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF JAMES

Theme: "True Faith in God Produces True Following of God": James 1:3, 4, 22: "Knowing that the perfecting of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves." James 2:18: "Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works; show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith." See also James 4:7, 8; 5:19, 20.

TRUE FAITH IN GOD PRODUCES:

I. Victory in Trials, Chapter 1—Key verse 12: "Blesed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him."

II. Righteousness in Human Relations, Chapter 2—Key verse 26: "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead."

III. Wisdom in Speech, Chapter 3—Key verse 2: "For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also."

IV. Humility in Heart and Life, Chapter 4—Key verse 10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you."

V. Patience Unto the End, Chapter 5—Key verse 7: "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming

of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain."

The book of James is a relentless quest for reality in religion. He evidently believes that a religion which does not change the life and control it for righteousness in heart and speech and hand cannot save the soul. If Christianity really links men with God, imparting His life to men, then men ought to become like God.

Please read James now, chapter by chapter, having clearly in your mind the central theme of the book and the central thought for each chapter as presented in the analytical outline above. Constantly in your study of the book refer to this outline.

STUDY III

Chapter 1

True Faith in God Produces Victory in Trials—Key verse 12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting.

2 Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into

manifold temptations; 3 knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. 4 And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; 8 a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: 10 and the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. 11 For the sun ariseth with the scorching wind, and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings.

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him. 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: 14 each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death. 16 Be not deceived, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning. 18 Of his own will he

brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

19 Ye know this, my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. 21 Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. 23 For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: 24 for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing. 26 If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain. 27 Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.—JAMES, CHAPTER 1.

SALUTATION (VERSE 1)

The writer is James, the brother of our Lord, and one of the outstanding leaders of the early Jerusalem church. Those addressed in the epistle are the Jews of the Dispersion, bowed under persecution and hardship. The animating and life-giving centre of the epistle is "The Matchless One"—the Lord Jesus Christ. The name "Lord" declares His essential

Deity and Godhead. The name " Jesus " is His human name and links Him as " Saviour " to baffled, burdened and broken humanity. His name " Christ " declares Him to be the anointed One of God, the Messiah of the Old Testament, the Saviour of the world and the central, pivotal figure of all ages.

In relationship to the Matchless One, James declares himself as " bond servant." There is a subtle, strong meaning here. James, who knew Jesus as a boy on the human level with a close and intimate touch in the family, came one day to where, in the figure of the word " bond servant," he walked up to the door-post and laid his ear flat against the wooden door-jamb and willingly and gladly allowed it to be punctured with an awl held in a hand that had once been "punctured " by a Roman nail. From that moment James in effect says: " I belong wholly to Him only, I have made Him my Master forever."

VICTORY IN TRIALS (VERSES 2–27)

In verses 2–4, we find that faith produces patience under trials by revealing the divine purpose in the trials and by lifting them out of the realm of blind and sodden fate and chance. To the suffering Jews of the Dispersion James makes a most tactful approach in his message.

In verses 5–8 we find that the prayer of faith opens the pray-er's heart so the eye of his heart can see the purpose of God and in some measure understand it; this lightens the burdens of his heart. Note James' normal estimate of faith.

In verses 9–11 James says that true faith in God removes the chief occasions of trials—poverty and riches. It does this by setting both poverty and riches in a new light. Both are seen to be temporal and secondary and altogether apart from the heart-of-things. Neither should be a determining factor in the life of an immortal soul, heir to the riches of glory. James seems to show that " trials " are things to stand while " temptations " are things to withstand. A great man of God of a former generation, Rev. Dr. G. B. Strickler, once said to a sufferer in his congregation, " Some of us are called upon to *do* God's will, while others are called upon to *bear* God's will," and the latter is usually a harder and a richer task than the former.

In verses 19–27, we see that the secret of faith's victory in trial is found in its tenacious grip upon the Word. Such a faith not only hears; but understands, believes, and obeys the Word. The man of true faith reveals his relation to the Word as an humble learner, then a faithful doer and a righteous liver.

In the closing verses of the chapter, 26–27, James gives us three tests for applied Christianity. Self-control is the first test which he mentions, showing how easy it is for the human heart to be self-deceived; to have a religion which in reality is a vain religion, empty, unreal, marked with vital insincerity.

The second test is unselfish love. He declares that a religion which is limpid-clear before the eyes of God and man is one that is marked by a love that does not look for returns that shall recompense it. You do not

expect to receive back gifts from the "fatherless and afflicted widows." This is a wondrous practical test and to it faith should be constantly subjected.

His third and last test is an unspotted life. If the alchemy of God's truth could show the extent of the reality of our Christianity, what a revelation! How many "spots" there would be on many lives now highly revered! How easy it is for the touch of the world to "spot" and "mar" the Christian. As the priest of God of old moved silently through the sacred precincts of the temple and stood before God for the people, he wore, by God's command, pure, "fine," spotless linen.

If we want victory in trials, that we be not submerged and overwhelmed thereby, then we must be an humble learner and a faithful doer of the Word, having life marked by self-control, unselfish love and an unspotted character. These only come from true faith in God.

Now re-read chapter 1, underscoring what have impressed you as key-words or phrases, and don't leave it until you can tell in your own words its outstanding thoughts and teachings. In preparation for the next study, read chapter 2.

STUDY IV

Chapter 2

True Faith in God Produces Righteousness in

Human Relations—Key verse 26: "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead."

The theme of the book of James is: "True Faith in God Produces True Following of God." In the first chapter we found that true faith in God produces victory in trials. In this chapter, we find that it rights and makes plumb and true all human relations.

1 My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. 2 For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; 3 and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my footstool; 4 do ye not make distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him? 6 But ye have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? 7 Do not they blaspheme the honorable name by which ye are called? 8 Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: 9 but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. 11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said

also, Do not kill. Now if thou dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak ye, and so do, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty. 13 For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment.

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, 16 and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. 18 Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith. 19 Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well. The demons also believe, and shudder. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect; 23 and the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God. 24 Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith. 25 And in like manner was not also Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers, and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead.—JAMES, CHAPTER 2.

HUMAN RELATIONS

Verses 1–13: The man who lives by faith in God, looks through this faith and sees every man as he really is and as he is related to God. Unfair and selfish class distinctions are evidences of non-faith in God. False respect of persons is prompted by pride, which is a false and fatal and unchristian state of heart. God has clearly declared Himself as "no respecter of persons." In so far as we are His and are governed by His standards and are possessed by the true faith we will do as He does. We cannot force man-made distinctions over on to God and His plan of salvation. This is a lesson we are dull and slow in learning. The humblest man in your city, if Godly in heart and loyal in life to Jesus Christ, has a higher standing in Heaven with Jehovah God than the most distinguished man on the avenue who is careless and Christless in life and ungodly in heart.

The Church must not be governed by respect of persons and thus become "judges with evil thoughts." If the Church is too fine for the poor and humble to feel actually and always at home therein, then it is too fine for Jesus Christ to feel at home therein. To mark our Christian service and worship by such distinction is unreasonable, unlawful and unrighteous.

The "royal law," the "law of liberty," which is the law of love, makes us free from sin and self. The law is an organism; if we break any part we break the law. So intent are we often upon avoiding outbreaking and commonly called heinous sins forbidden by the law, that we forget to obey the law

of love, which is fundamental and all-inclusive. Truth, known, loved and obeyed always yields liberty (James 1:25).

In verses 14–26 we find that deeds of love answering every cry of the human heart are the essential

EVIDENCES OF A REAL FAITH

There is so much that is labeled " Faith " which is not genuine. When such is tested it is soon found to be counterfeit.

We might call these verses " Viewing the Remains." Faith without works is dead. Is there a corpse at your spiritual house? Workless faith is really faith's funeral. There is either a corpse or there are twins at your house. James here tells us that faith without works is dead. And in Hebrews 9:14 we read of " dead works," which are works without faith. Faith and works are like the Siamese twins. They stand or fall, they survive or perish together.

With fearful clearness James describes here a dead faith. He shows us that mere intellectual assent and formal mental agreement to certain spiritual facts is uncontrolling in us and is non-significant in the moral and spiritual realm and before God. With sharp scorn he further declares that this sort of faith is both prevalent and popular in Hell.

In describing a living faith, James shows that it involves love, trust and obedience. There are persons described by James who " say " they have faith—such a faith he declares is valueless. Unless the tree buds forth with leaves and fruit there is no full evi-

dence of life. Unless faith issues in works there is evidence that it is dead. We are not saved by our good works, but if we are saved, we will do good works. Good works are not the ground of our salvation, but they are the outgrowth of it. "If a man love me, he will keep my word" (John 14:23).

It is not a question of creed *or* character, but it is always creed *and* character, for what we believe determines what we are. We cannot divide doctrine and duty, for duty performed is based upon doctrine known and believed. They are quite indissoluble.

As you go again carefully through chapter 2, get forever clear and fixed in your mind what James says about faith and works and just what he means by what he says. Please read again the epistle at this point.

STUDY V

Chapter 3

True Faith in God Produces Wisdom in Speech—Key verse 2: "For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also."

We need to keep constantly in mind in this study of the homely and everyday epistle written by the brother of our Lord, that James' central thought is: *True Faith in God Produces True Following of God.* James does not say that it ought to produce true fol-

lowing of God. He believes in the dynamic of God's Spirit. He shows us in this book that if our faith is genuine and is fixed in Jehovah through Christ, it will actually and inevitably fruit out into the Christian life which is true following of God.

James comes in this chapter to the acid test. He has hinted at some of the snares of the tongue before. In 1:19 he says: "Let every man be swift to hear; slow to speak; slow to wrath!" and further down, in 1:26, he says: "If any man thinketh himself to be religious while he bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain." Now, in this chapter he is devoting the main drive of his thought to this single, tremendously vital item of Christian living, the control and use of the tongue. He believes that this is the final test.

1 Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment. 2 For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. 3 Now if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also. 4 Behold, the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman willeth. 5 So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and set-

teth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed by mankind: 8 but the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison. 9 Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the likeness of God: 10 out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. 11 Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter? 12 can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither can salt water yield sweet.

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? let him show by his good life his works in meekness of wisdom. 14 But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace.—JAMES, CHAPTER 3.

AN UNTAMED TONGUE IS SURE EVIDENCE OF NON-FAITH (VERSES 1–12)

In verses 1–2 he first declares the responsibility of knowledge, stating the great truth that we cannot idly view knowledge entrusted to us, but shall be held to a strict accountability for our stewardship of it. Then

he adds that the most common human weakness and offense is with the tongue. Notwithstanding our privileges and acquaintance with the dangers of hasty, unkind and unchristian speech, still we allow the words to slip over our lips and they become forces which we can never recall and whose impact for evil may be endless.

In verses 3–4, with vivid figures of charging horse and storm-driven ship, James portrays the small instruments of bridle and rudder by which these are severally controlled. Thus he declares the tongue, though small, is mighty among the members of the body and dominates as a tyrant the product of a man's life.

In verses 5–8 he follows up this thought, showing that the tongue is an unmeasured power for evil or good. He declares, in effect, that as the overturning of a lamp in a stable where a man was milking a cow resulted in the devastating Chicago fire, which wrought havoc with property and life; so sharp, untrue, unkind, unclean, ungodly words are as arrows tipped with fire, winging their flight to initiate conflagration with undreamed of wreckage and tragedy in its smouldering wake.

In the four verses 9–12, James makes it vivid to the reader that a tongue uncontrolled and ungoverned by faith is glibly inconsistent. The same tongue in the same head of the same man wagging above the same heart one moment piously blesses God, and in the next moment impiously curses God's child. James says whenever you can find a spring that will send forth

from the same opening sweet water and bitter water then you will discover in nature the counterpart of the uncontrolled tongue of man. With marked conservatism he adds: " My brethren, these things ought not to be." He follows this with the startling truth that the tongue simply opens the door that men may listen and know what sort of guests we have in the home of our heart. We cannot read each other's hearts, but the tongue will tell what is on the inside. This truth embodies a great urge that we have the heart dominated and controlled by faith in God.

THE TWO CONTRASTING WISDOMS ARE PICTURED IN VERSES 13–18

In verse 13 we find that oftentimes the evidence of faith's control is found in the silence of heavenly wisdom. We should bear in mind that the terms " wisdom " and " folly," as used in the Scripture, have reference to the moral and spiritual rather than to the intellectual. The " fool " is the man out of harmony and therefore out of touch with God. We are not surprised, therefore, that the revelation thus describes him: " The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God."

In verses 14–18 we find the two wisdoms sharply contrasted. All wisdom other than that " from above " is earthly wisdom. Its standards are of the earth, and it is limited, therefore, to the lower levels of life. It is further described as " sensual," making its appeal to the physical and natural man, and entirely overlooking his higher nature, the spiritual. Further, says

James, it is "devilish." It is animated by the spirit and controlled by the principles of "the god of this world," and the trademark on every item of this wisdom is "the mark of the beast." This wisdom may sometimes be put to pious uses, but it is futile because it is not of faith. The issue of earthly wisdom is never construction and conservation, but is always confusion.

In blessed and bold relief there stands out against this earthly wisdom that wisdom which is "from above." Such is the heavenly wisdom. James patiently and in detail marks its characteristics. First of all he says it is "pure." It is limpid-clear without the stained marks of willing sin or rebellious self. It is "peaceable." Not compromising with evil, of course, or crying peace, peace when there is no peace, but just as truly not litigious or argumentative, multiplying words and darkening counsel. Then he adds it is "gentle." By this he means that it touches life with an understanding, sympathetic and tender hand. Moreover, he says it is "easily entreated." By this he means that the heavenly wisdom is open to conviction. It is not governed by prejudice. It is not stubborn but teachable. Then he tells us that it is "full of mercy and good fruits." It actually and practically enlarges and blesses life richly. He adds that it is "without variance." Thus denying any accusation that it is vacillating and declaring that its feet are on the rock and that it is steady and sustained. And the last touch that he gives is that it is "without hypocrisy." The heavenly wisdom has nothing to hide, but

is frank and sincere, and therefore, its accomplishments are permanent and abiding, acceptable to God and fraught with blessing to men. The wisdom that wears is proven by its work and the consummation of heavenly wisdom is that it makes for "peace."

Having studied this startling chapter on the tongue, read it again; yes, and again, and let the full glare of the sparkling red light of warning constantly dispute the right-of-way with your treacherous tongue. How we do need wisdom in speech! Are we keenly conscious of this lack? "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith. . . ."

STUDY VI

Chapter 4

True Faith in God Produces Humility in Heart and Life—Key verse 10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you."

If the theme of our great book is a true theme, *True Faith in God Produces True Following of God,* then true faith will and must attack the citadel of relentless hostility to its control—pride on the throne of the human heart.

1 Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your

pleasures that war in your members? 2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. 3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures. 4 Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God. 5 Or think ye that the scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying? 6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore the scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. 7 Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall exalt you.

11 Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?

13 Come now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and trade, and get gain: 14 whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then

vanisheth away. 15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall both live, and do this or that. 16 But now ye glory in your vauntings: all such glorying is evil. 17 To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.—JAMES, CHAPTER 4.

HUMAN SELFISHNESS IS SUICIDAL

In verses 1 and 2, James tells us the origin of the great menace of the human race, war. There has been endless theorizing on this item. Why, after eighteen centuries of Christ and Christianity, do men and nations still war? James says the root of it is in human lusts. Out of the human heart come wars. The presence of lusts and fightings declare the absence of real controlling faith in God. In this chapter James notes the sinister triumvirate: The world, verse 4; the flesh, verses 2 and 3; and the devil, verse 7. Each of these contributes its item to the mad maelstrom of war.

In verse 4, James pictures the age-long hostility. There can be no truce between God and the world. James does not say that we should not love both, but declares that we cannot. To try to do so is to love the world. There is no neutrality here. In the margin, verse 4 reads: " Ye who break your marriage vow to God, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? " God wants and we supremely need an undivided devotion and a love for Him that controls the life.

In verses 5–10, we have the description of defeating

the devil. Controlling faith secures a divine alliance and thus insures the devil's defeat. True faith renders man humble, consciously dependent, submissive, pure, repentant.

James emphasizes the details of the process. "Be submissive to God," stands at the forefront of this successful conflict. Take the oath of allegiance, put on the uniform, stand ready for God's will and God's way. The next item in the process is, "Resist the devil." There is need of moral rigidity. In every fight to the finish somebody is going to run. God has made it so that we do not have to run in this conflict. James further adds: "Draw nigh to God." God is looking for some man who shows that he has fight in him, one who has real courage and is ready to resist evil. To such an one God hastens that He may stand by his side. Besides the above in this defeating of the devil, James adds: "Cleanse your hands, purify your hearts, mourn, humble yourselves." In this fight we must keep our conscience clear and our hands clean.

In verses 11 and 12, he declares that true faith inhibits censorious judgment against our brother.

This epistle speaks of "hearers only," and speaks also of "judges." True faith leads to neither of these, but declares itself in "doers."

Concerning censorious criticism Jesus says: "It is folly," and pictures it by the ludicrous "beam" in the critic's eye. Paul says it is presumption because the one you criticize is not your servant, but God's, and you are also God's servant. The one criticized does

not stand or fall to you, but to his Master and God is able to make him stand. Our province is not to judge but to beware lest we be stumbling-blocks ourselves. The author declares that such censorious judgment is lawless; it is against the law. It is especially against the royal law, which is the law of love. We do not parade our family frailties. Why do we publicly proclaim the delinquencies of our brethren in the family of the Lord?

In verses 13–17, we have the conflict between self-confidence and the sovereignty of God. How vain are human vauntings! We say, "we will go, spend a year, trade, get gain." God says, "Thou fool, this night, thy soul . . . whose then?" (Luke 12:20). For human life James has a unique and strangely impressive figure. Your life, says he, is "a vapour." He seems to intimate that man can predict the exact moment of sunrise to-morrow; yea, he can predict it accurately for March 18, 1983, or any other future date; but who can tell how long the vapour of the morning will linger over the river? "See the vapour, now here, now gone, that is your life and mine," says James.

In worldly affairs we are apt to leave God out. The disassociation of the secular and the spiritual is liable to be fatal to the highest ends of each. Beware of departmentalizing your life and then locking God out of certain departments. Men live and plan as though they would be here forever. This they do in the face of God's unavoidable, daily, evidences of our mortality.

The recurring sin of each generation is pictured in one of our Gospel hymns in the startling question: "Have you forgotten God?" James solemnly warns us that knowledge is responsibility. Jesus, in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, as He recites the parables of the Virgins, the Talents, and the Last Judgment, reiterates in each case a solemn warning, viz.: That the punishment, which is final and awful, is for not doing. God emphasizes, but we forget, the seriousness of the sins of omission. God wants a clear, positive loyalty to Him and His will, and is not content with mere negative righteousness. Listen humbly to Daniel as he arraigns Belshazzar: "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." To know what is right and true and yet not do it! "This is sin."

Read again the chapter, noting carefully James' arraignment of the mighty and subtle enemies of faith's lordship in the human heart.

STUDY VII

Chapter 5

True Faith in God Produces Patience Unto the End. As we come to the close of the study of the book of James we are glad that his purview reaches to the end. The human heart rejoices in the finality of true faith. The book as a whole declares that true faith in God

produces true following of God. In this closing chapter James says that true faith is sufficient for the whole journey.

1 Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. 4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. 5 Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not resist you.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand. 9 Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the judge standeth before the doors. 10 Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment.

13 Is any among you suffering? let him pray. Is any cheerful? let him sing praise. 14 Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. 16 Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working. 17 Elijah was a man of like passions with us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again; and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19 My brethren, if any among you err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.—JAMES, CHAPTER 5.

In verses 1–6 the thought, tender and singularly charming to any under stress in human relations, is: True faith rests in a God who clearly sees life's tragic oppression and always hears the bitter cry of the helpless. Nothing is ever settled until it is settled right in God's universe. There will be a real and final re-

adjustment in the end which will level life. The rich may oppress the poor, but they cannot escape God. Riches secured by fraud secrete their own fatal poison.

There are two vital questions about riches: How are they gotten? How are they used? Things will rust, be moth-eaten, decay and vanish. How foolish to fix the soul on that which is not fixed but fleeting. In many instances of human wealth, it is an acute question whether the man has the money or the money has the man. Riches, luxuries, human exclusiveness, often lead to cruel forgetfulness of those who suffer for our success. Let the oppressor beware, for God, the Lord of Hosts, hears.

In verses 7–11 we discover that those who have true faith can afford to be patient; yes, they can afford to be patient under testing trial. To a discouraged Christian father a little lad propounded a startling question. As the gloom settled upon the home day after day, one day the boy looked up into his father's face and said: "Father, is God dead?" Jesus did live, He did die, He arose and is now living, and is coming again. We know not when He may return, but this meeting with Him, whether in the release and victory of death, or the glory of His advent, means majesty and peace and life for His humblest follower. Therefore, beloved, endure with patience and you shall be blessed. We gain courage when we remember the "worthies of the Lord" of old, the prophets and their fellow-labourers who did endure and whose labours now challenge and steady our hearts. Though man is

cruel, because selfish, God is full of pity and mercy, because He is love.

Verse 12 declares true faith delivers from the heat of passion and prevents profanity. The old prophet declares, "He that believeth shall not make haste." We are to beware of the heat of haste and hasty speech. True faith protects from profanity and produces the unhurried, undriven, unafraid life.

In verses 13–18 James links up true faith with prevailing prayer. While pride neutralizes prayer, true faith in an humble heart insures prevailing prayer. This faith keeps us in warm and vital touch with the great Physician. We can and should bring our every need, physical and spiritual, to Him. When we pray we counsel with Him. Prayer links us with the power of God. God is the same now that He was in the days of Elijah. Elijah was a man of like passions with you and me. His prayer wrought marvels and gave glory to God in the midst of a hostile court and king. Our prayer can cast dismay among the forces of the devil. Nothing else but prayer can do it. Of course, when we really pray, we will put our life and its powers at God's disposal in answering the prayer.

In the closing verses, 19–20, James declares that true faith will link other lives to God. What a noble climax for our study! Our faith links us to God, and we may then be used of Him as the golden link to bind into His life other lives which we point to the Saviour from sin. The supreme service of true faith is that it is the channel through which the salvation of Christ may come and convert a sinner from the error and

doom of his way, and thus " save a soul from death " and " cover a multitude of sins."

After reading again and thoughtfully this closing chapter of our study with James, go back over the whole book and check each chapter with the theme and verify its claim as a true thought of the book.

III

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

STUDY I

DATE: This letter from the pen of the Apostle Peter is generally believed to have been written about the year sixty-four. The earnest drive of the author throughout the epistle is to conserve patience and strength and hope for the scattered Christians under the vicious persecution of the Emperor Nero.

THE AUTHOR

The author is, by practically universal consent, recognized as the apostle, Simon Peter—the "brave, impulsive, confident, unstable, affectionate" Simon Peter. Peter by trade belonged to the fishermen. The Lord Jesus Christ divided the vocation with the little word "of," and he became a "fisher-of-men." Peter knew the privileges of the inner circle among the apostles. It was Simon Peter who tested out his Master's presence and power by walking on the water. From his lips fell the Great Confession, and he witnessed the matchless revelation on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Still unhumbled, we find his disobedient sword on

that darkest night striking out at a man's head and severing his ear. We find him lurking in the shadows, on the supreme night of testing, following afar off as Christ goes to the mock trial before the Sanhedrin. His tragic denial with brutal oaths, his broken-hearted and tear-drenched repentance, his complete eclipse when he saw Calvary's cross and its bowed and limp body, all tell the human story of Simon Peter.

He was, however, first among those to arrive at the tomb, first among those to recognize and rest upon the resurrection, and after the conversation by the sea in the early morning air he began giving undeniable proof that he spoke from his heart, in answer to the searching question of Jesus, "Lovest thou me?" when he said: "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Thenceforth the great apostle's life was poured out in feeding Christ's lambs and tending His sheep.

Pentecost and the heroics of the early Church are vibrant with the unshakable and dauntless spirit of this mighty witness. Equally clear is his testimony to his risen, living Master, whether He appears before the Sanhedrin on trial for His life or witness-bears with unwonted, world-wide, generous, Christian catholicity in the home of the Centurion Cornelius.

There is a legend teeming with significance regarding the closing days of this great apostle. Peter is under the fires of persecution in the city of Rome, according to this legend, though his presence in reality in Rome has never been substantiated in fact. Fleeing out of the city, he meets his Master. Shocked and

astounded and humbled by the sight, Peter, ever ready of tongue, cries: "*Domine, quo vadis?*" ("Master, whither goest Thou?") To this question, Jesus, according to the legend, replies: "I go to Rome, there to be crucified once more." Peter, rebuked, bulwarked, steadied and renewed by this brief touch with his Master, turns his footsteps back into the city to continue his witness and make the supreme sacrifice when he is crucified for the faith. By his own request, feeling unworthy even to be crucified after the manner of Jesus, he is crucified head downward.

THOSE ADDRESSED

Those to whom this dauntless, rock-man Peter sends this message of hope and cheer are the scattered, beleaguered Jews—"strangers" in a strange and cruel environment. They are being tested as to their trust and their life and their endurance. It is to his brethren thus besieged and cruelly beset that he sends this message of sure, steadying hope.

THE MESSAGE

Rev. Wade C. Smith, in his comments in the *Fishers of Men Testaments*, calls attention to the fact that "suffering" is mentioned sixteen times in this short epistle, and that four things are referred to as "precious." The precious things are: "The proof of your faith," 1:7; "The blood of Christ," 1:19; "A living stone," 2:4-6; "A meek and quiet spirit," 3:4; (is in the sight of God of great price—that is, precious). Rev. Dr. E. C. Caldwell defines the message in the

book, " Christ the strength and portion of His people." Dr. G. Campbell Morgan gives us the underlying thought, " The sufficiency of grace." To us the message of the book is stated in this theme: "*Hope Founded on Grace Satisfies*" (see 1:3, 13, 21).

STUDY II

ANALYSIS AND OUTLINE OF FIRST PETER

Theme: Hope Founded on Grace Satisfies (1:3, 13).

I. Hope is well founded on grace, 1:1-25.

A. Salutation—verses 1-2. Peace resting upon grace.

B. *This hope is God-provided—verses 3-12.*

(1) A hope God-begotten and living—verses 3-5.

(2) A hope no trial can dim—verses 6-9.

(3) A hope foretold, now fulfilled—verses 10-12.

C. *This hope is Christ-purchased—verses 13-25.*

(1) A hope that calls to holy living—verses 13-16.

(2) A hope that costs the life of God—verses 17-21.

(3) A hope that continueth forever—verses 22-25.

HOPE FOUNDED ON GRACE SATISFIES BECAUSE:

II. It fruits into Christian conduct, 2:1–3:12.

A. *Christian conduct becomes God's people—2:1-10.*

B. *Christian conduct becomes God's people:* (1) Before the world: They glorify God as (a) Pilgrims and citizens—2:11-17; (2) In the home:

They glorify God as (a) Servants—2:18-25; (b) Wives—3:1-6; (c) Husbands—3:7; (d) Lovers of righteousness—3:8-12.

HOPE FOUNDED ON GRACE SATISFIES BECAUSE:

III. It roots in Christian character, 3:13–5:11. That is, Christ-likeness or Christ in us.

A. *Suffering and glory—3:13–5:11.*

(1) Patience in suffering—3:13-22.

(2) Cleansed through suffering—4:1-11.

(3) Rejoicing through suffering—4:12-19.

(4) Glorified after suffering—5:1-11.

IV. Conclusion, exhorting and testifying, 5:12-14.

This is the true grace of God! The foundation of our hope: "Stand fast" (5:12).

We urge you to get the background of this little letter by following the outstanding items in Peter's life through the Gospels and the Acts; found in John 1:41, 42; Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 5:8; Matthew 16:13-23; 17:1-9; 26:36-41, 51, 52, 58, 69-75; John 20:2-10; 21:1-22; Acts 1:15; 2:14-47; 3:1-11; 4:8-20; 5:1-16; 10:1-48; 12:1-17. Please read these thoughtfully that you may know the man behind the message. A thorough study of the analysis of the book presented above is of the most vital importance to understanding the detail study to follow. We suggest that you refer to it constantly as the later studies unfold the full message.

We earnestly ask that you read the epistle through at least twice without referring again to the outline—

then that you read it through with careful references to the outline and the several divisions and subdivisions. As you see fit, mark these divisions on the margin of your Bible. Again the epistle should be read through and the effort made to recall the divisions of the book without reference to the outline.

In preparing for the next study, which will cover the introduction, verses 1 and 2, and the first well defined division of the epistle, chapter 1:3-12, please do not fail to read these verses over and over.

STUDY III

Chapter 1:1-12

We are centering our thought, as we learned in the last study, around this theme: *Hope Founded on Grace Satisfies* (1:3, 13).

We now come to the intensive study of chapter 1:1-12. Please read it carefully as printed here below:

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrec-

tion of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, 7 that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ: 8 whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. 10 Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 11 searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. 12 To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look into.—I Peter 1:1-12.

HOPE IS WELL FOUNDED ON GRACE, CHAPTER 1. SALUTATION: VERSES 1–2

"*Peter.*" What a dynamic personality! What a many-sided man! We see him passing through the

process, from the self-sufficient Simon to the salvaged soul in the denial and repentance and on to the stalwart, serving Peter of Pentecost. God has prepared the man for the message. He is well equipped to serve the "dispersed," disheartened, down-trodden, broken Christians whom he calls the "elect sojourners." They are "God's own people scattered over the earth living as foreigners."

Peter calls himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ." That is "one sent" with a definite message and mission. He realizes that he represents his Royal Redeemer. He reminds the "elect sojourners" that the work of "sanctification" is their portion. Here he refers to that transcendent process which is born with the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" and which begins and ends with "obedience." It is prompted by "grace" and produces "peace." This whole mighty work is under the guidance and power of the "Spirit."

"Peace" was a great word for the Dispersion. It must have steadied the distressed and homeless Christian to be assured that all this inexplicable testing was "according to the foreknowledge of God," and that He was for the Christian a tender and devoted "Father."

THIS HOPE WHICH IS WELL FOUNDED ON GRACE IS GOD-PROVIDED: VERSES 3–12. THIS GOD-PROVIDED HOPE IS GOD-BEGOTTEN AND LIVING: VERSES 3–5

At the very threshold of this message of strength and

consolation Peter puts a word vibrant with cheer and gladness, " blessed," and the voice that blesses God will soon be noting God's blessings to its own heart and life. He then points the bruised and distressed elect ones of the Dispersion to the " great mercy " that reigned in God's heart in His dealings with us. Thus He comes immediately to a partial statement of the exceeding precious theme of the epistle, declaring that by the " resurrection " of Jesus Christ every Christian becomes possessor and partaker of " a living hope," an undying, deathless hope.

After Jesus' betrayal Peter's hope died. The trial and the crucifixion only deepened the darkness that had settled upon his spirit. What a change he experienced at the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea! The resurrection of Jesus forever confirmed in Peter's mind, wrought a final faith in his soul. It became the central theme of the apostle's preaching. Practically every sermon in the book of Acts centralizes its drive around the resurrection. It was also the basic foundation for the faith of that peak-Christian, Paul (Romans 1:4).

The Christian is also begotten unto " an inheritance " imperishable, undefiled, unfading; and to these distressed ones Peter declares that the inheritance is kept for them who are kept for it by God.

PETER FURTHER DECLARES THAT THIS IS A HOPE NO TRIAL CAN DIM: VERSES 6–9

He recognizes, as do other divinely inspired writers, that the sufferings here are only " for a little while,"

and that even in the presence of "trials" a Christian with unshaken confidence can "greatly rejoice." Trials can only purify and strengthen true faith just as the fires can only destroy the dross and leave the gold so clear in its purity that the master can see his own likeness and image reflected therein. Although we cannot now, with our human eyes, see this matchless Friend, whom we reflect, yet by faith we can see Him "believing," and can enter into the heritage wherein we "rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory." For we know that the issue, the sure issue, "the end of faith," is the completed "salvation" of our souls.

How marvellously Peter here deals with pressing, acute conditions in the lives of his readers and in every Christian life! It is blessed to believe and know, through years of testing, that the Bible, God's revelation, will either give us the answer to every problem in all life's experiences or will direct us to a place where we can rest and wait until we are ready for God to reveal the answer.

Peter further states regarding this God-provided hope, that it is:

A HOPE FORETOLD AND NOW FULFILLED: VERSES 10–12

In the dim dawnings of God's dealing with His people the prophets foretold "the grace that should come." Peter declares that the "spirit of Christ" was in these prophets of olden days, and that they testified of "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should

follow them." He further states that their richest ministration was not to their own generation, but unto these dispersed Christians, unto whom he writes, and unto the Christians of all ages. Only God's people on this side of the Cross can know the fulness of His revelation in the early dispensation and can fathom the depths of the glories of grace. This they can do " by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven," and into these things even the " angels desire to look." Again we see how Peter steadies and bulwarks the harassed and distressed hearts of his needy followers. He lets the certainty and fulness of the glory of salvation by grace and its unfailing consummation in every trusting life, cast its glow and shed its beams of warmth and life upon the darkened pathway of the elect sojourners of the Dispersion.

God's Word, not man's explanation, is " a lamp for our feet and a light to our pathway." Unless Bible study brings us constantly to the Book itself, and its living truth, it is manifestly a failure.

Read verses 3–12 of the first chapter and let the Holy Spirit tell you again in His words that your hope is God-provided.

STUDY IV

Chapter 1:13-25

In our last study we discovered that our hope was well founded on grace because it is God-provided.

Besides declaring that this hope is "*God-provided,*" Peter now shows that it is "*Christ-purchased.*"

13 Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind,
be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace
that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of
Jesus Christ; 14 as children of obedience, not fash-
ioning yourselves according to your former lusts in
the time of your ignorance: 15 but like as he who
called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all
manner of living; 16 because it is written, Ye shall
be holy; for I am holy. 17 And if ye call on him as
Father, who without respect of persons judgeth ac-
cording to each man's work, pass the time of your
sojourning in fear: 18 knowing that ye were re-
deemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or
gold, from your vain manner of life handed down
from your fathers; 19 but with precious blood, as
of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even
the blood of Christ: 20 who was foreknown indeed
before the foundation of the world, but was mani-
fested in the end of the times for your sake, 21 who
through him are believers in God, that raised him
from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your
faith and hope might be in God. 22 Seeing ye have
purified your souls in your obedience to the truth
unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one
another from the heart fervently: 23 having been
begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of in-
corruptible, through the word of God, which liveth
and abideth. 24 For,

All flesh is as grass,
And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass.

The grass withereth, and the flower falleth:
25 But the word of the Lord abideth for ever.

And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.—I Peter 1:13-25.

He tells us that this hope that is well founded on grace *calls to holy living* (13–16).

Peter will not lower his standards in the presence of the dire testings to which the Christians are subjected. In verse 13 he gives the accurate gist of the epistle in practically stating the theme. He urges these needy Christians to gird up their mind and think, not to let it run out to loose ends in self-pity; " to be sober " and to weigh all of life's values unconfused by trial or suffering; and to " set . . . hope . . . on grace," and there let it rest with unwavering assurance of its certain consummation. He further warns them against distress deadening their sense of holiness and holy living, and challenges them to what is God's expectation from every Christian, " Ye shall be holy, for I am holy."

The cost of this hope Peter tells them was the life of God (17–21).

Their lives are in jeopardy. They know something of the costliness of Christian fidelity; and Peter, to strengthen them to continuance and faithfulness, reminds them of their redemption, stating that it was " not with corruptible things, as silver or gold, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ."

Note well and be prepared for further enlargement

of the thought here suggested; namely, the linking of suffering and glory together.

Foreknown from the foundation of the world to God was this matchless sacrifice, but for our sakes it has been manifested "at the ends of the times." Manifested indeed to those "who through him are believers in God that raised him from the dead." Thus He has brought it about that our "faith and hope might be in God."

As a climax to all that he has said regarding this hope, he now declares that "it continueth forever" (verses 22–25).

Peter exhorts to brotherly love, and shows how purity of life is linked up with "obedience to the truth." He evidently remembers the commandment of the Master that they should love one another as an "evidence of their obedience." He further reminds his readers that, in contrast with all flesh and all material things, which are as grass and which wither, stands the "Word of the Lord," which abideth forever." "And this," says he, "is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you." Surely such a hope as Peter here presents to disheartened, baffled, persecuted Christians is the only voice in all the confusion of earth that can reach the human heart with a full and final message, as God's Word assures of God's love and the certainty of hope's rich fruition.

These studies can only be made a permanent acquisition and help to the student by constant reference to the text. We have the text printed

with the study with the earnest expectation of its faithful use. Won't you now sit quietly with an open mind, opened by the Holy Spirit in response to your earnest petition, and let Him speak to you through the words of the first chapter of First Peter? Let Him stay your heart on the eternal verities that belong to God's children of every age. Let Him bulwark and strengthen you against coming tempests that are sure to beat upon your life. May the Holy Spirit ever make us remember that our hope is well founded on grace because it is God-provided and Christ-purchased.

In our next study we find the practical issues of this matchless hope and its fruits. In preparation for our study, please read chapter 2 and chapter 3 through verse 12. We also ask every earnest student of the series to read over and over the entire letter. You will be amazed at the way in which passages hitherto of only dim, general import will thus crystallize into definite and permanent personal, spiritual possessions, and rich possessions.

STUDY V

Chapters 2:1–3:12

Our study just closed showed that the hope founded on grace is a God-provided and Christ-purchased hope. We traced the hand of God in preparation and purchase of this glorious expectation. In this present

study we find the fruitage of this hope, as in the studies to follow we examine its rootage.

1 Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation; 3 if ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: 4 unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, 5 ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Because it is contained in scripture,

> Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone,
> elect, precious:
> And he that believeth on him shall not be
> put to shame.

7 For you therefore that believe is the preciousness: but for such as disbelieve,

> The stone which the builders rejected,
> The same was made the head of the corner;

8 and,

> A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense;

for they stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; 12 having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme; 14 or unto governors, as sent by him for vengeance on evil-doers and for praise to them that do well. 15 For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: 16 as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

18 Servants, be in subjection to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. 19 For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what glory is it, if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. 21 For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness;

by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

1 In like manner, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, even if any obey not the word, they may without the word be gained by the behaviour of their wives; 2 beholding your chaste behaviour coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel: 4 but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner aforetime the holy women also, who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose children ye now are, if ye do well, and are not put in fear by any terror.

7 Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honour unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered.

8 Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humbleminded: 9 not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but contrariwise blessing; for hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10 For

He that would love life,
And see good days,
Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
And his lips that they speak no guile:

11 And let him turn away from evil, and do good;
Let him seek peace, and pursue it.
12 For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,
And his ears unto their supplication:
But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.

—I Peter 2:1-3:12.

HOPE FOUNDED ON GRACE SATISFIES BECAUSE IT FRUITS INTO CHRISTIAN CONDUCT (I PETER 2:1–3:12)

In this present study, Peter first declares that: *Christian Conduct Becomes God's People* (verses 2:1-10).

Peter tells us what to " put out " and what to " put in " that God's grace may grow into Christian living. As the stumps must be torn up and the thorns and briars cut down, and the ground prepared for the seed-sowing, so Peter recognizes that all wickedness must be uprooted from the human heart.

This done, he then enjoins a passion for the truth, a " desire " for the " sincere milk of the word," in order that pure food may supplant poison and every factor of spiritual life may be conserved.

Christians thus become units in a living house, each one a " living stone." And thus God would build the body of Christ out of all who confirm the possession of spiritual life by the things they " put out " and that which they " put in," as they prepare the heart for God's control. Our relation to the Chief " Corner-

stone, Elect, Precious " determines our place and position in this glorious temple of God.

Those who have not the hope, reject the cornerstone and then it is a " stone of stumbling and a rock of offense;" but for God's own possessed people it is always the " Head of the corner." Surely Christian conduct becomes those built into God's temple and resting upon the Cornerstone Precious.

Peter now takes an advance step and further declares:

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT BECOMES GOD'S PEOPLE— BEFORE THE WORLD AS PILGRIMS AND CITIZENS (2:11-17)

He declares that they glorify God as " pilgrims." He calls upon them to untie all that would bind to the fleshly lusts of the world, and to remember that they are " pilgrims " and " sojourners," and are not to be fettered to a false kingdom. He also declares that they are observed of the Gentiles and can only neutralize the prejudice and hatred which race feels for race when their life is vocal with " good works," such good works that would force even the gainsayers to " glorify God." Further he flashes light upon their civil responsibility, and declares that they are to glorify God as " citizens." He calls for a willing and self-imposed regard for law. He condemns all lawlessness, clearly implying John's definition of sin when he says: " Sin is lawlessness " (I John 3:4). Peter shows these Christians, living under human government, that the real genius of

all government is to punish evil-doers and protect well-doers.

Christian Conduct! This always proves to be the practical key in any daily human experience and environment. While noting the liberty of the sons of God, he declares: "We have no right to exercise it as a cloak for wicked-doing, but must ever remember that our liberty is born of our being bond servants of God." Thus calling for Christian conduct in our civil, human relations, Peter cries: "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

In unfolding this practical thought, the author now shows:

CHRISTIAN CONDUCT BECOMES GOD'S PEOPLE—IN THE HOME (2:18–3:12)

Having shown these persecuted Christians how they can glorify God with their Christian conduct as "pilgrims" and as "citizens," he now goes into the domestic relations and declares that they can glorify God as "servants" (2:18-25).

How impossible it is for us to picture the dire sufferings of human bondage in those primitive days! How marvellously striking it is that Peter in no wise encourages or endorses anarchy with all its plausible promises which only conceal its sure wreckage and ruin.

Peter calls upon "servants" to endure "patiently," to glorify God by a devotion to duty in the relationship of life in which they find themselves. He pictures

before them the Matchless Servant, declaring: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example." The patient enduring of Jesus under reviling, stripes, the Cross, is spread before the Christian bondslaves of that day that they may ennoble their lowly estate by preserving Christian conduct.

Next Peter calls upon the Christians to glorify God in the home—as "wives" (3:1-6).

Here he touches the centre and heart of the home life, and, therefore, the centre and heart of all civil and spiritual interests, for they did and do and ever shall revolve around the sacred centre of motherhood. He calls upon wives to be in subjection to their own husbands, encouraging even those Christian women married to heathen husbands to trust their Christ-like walk and conversation as the highest means of leading those whom they love into the light of salvation.

And for womanhood, then and in every age, he proclaims their highest adorning. This, he declares, is not the "braiding of hair," or the wearing of "jewels," or the putting on of "apparel," but it is "a meek and quiet spirit," and a pure heart upon which God can look and pronounce that it is "priceless." Peter cites the examples of Godly women of old that those living under distress in his day may be encouraged to glorify God by the highest Christian conduct.

Still declaring that Christian conduct becomes God's people in the home, Peter now calls upon his readers to glorify God as "husbands" (3:7).

Presenting Christian chivalry as a man's true attitude to his wife, Peter reminds the husbands that they are not sole-heirs but " joint-heirs of the grace of life." He further warns all husbands against a harsh and hurtful attitude in the home and towards the wife; declaring that such a heart and such a conduct " hinders " their " prayers."

In closing this strong exhortation to Christian conduct in the world and in the home, and summing up the great drive of his thought, Peter further declares that Christian conduct becomes God's people wherever they are, and that they should glorify God, as " lovers of righteousness " (3:8-12).

Peter finds no place for revenge in the Christian's program nor for selfish schism. His words, and how significant they are! stand out in contrast to such conduct—" like-minded," " compassionate " (or sympathetic), " loving," " tender-hearted," " humble-minded." Practical Peter further adds, that a true lover of righteousness guards his lips and demands of them reverence for sincerity and truth.

To lovers of righteousness the promise is the ever-watchful eyes of God resting upon them in loving provision and protection, and His ears bended low to their humblest cry; but for evil-doers, those unmarked by Christian conduct, quite the reverse.

In this study we have the work-a-day Christianity. This is another touch, like the epistle of James, of " applied Christianity."

The pilgrim citizen, dwelling in a home governed in all its hearts by Christian conduct, shows himself a

lover of righteousness and, therefore, a true exponent of the saving and keeping grace of God.

Test out Peter's ideas by present day life and its demands.

STUDY VI

Chapters 3:13–4:11

In the preceding study, we viewed the "Fruit of Hope Founded on Grace." We discovered that it satisfies because "before the world and in the home" it produces "Christian Conduct." Christian conduct is the key to all life's practical demands. There, we studied the fruit, here we study the root.

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? 14 But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled; 15 but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: 16 having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ. 17 For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. 18 Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 19 in which also

he went and preached unto the spirits in prison,
20 that aforetime were disobedient, when the long-
suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while
the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight
souls, were saved through water: 21 which also after
a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism,
not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the
interrogation of a good conscience toward God,
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; 22 who is
on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven;
angels and authorities and powers being made sub-
ject unto him.

1 Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh,
arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he
that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;
2 that ye no longer should live the rest of your time
in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of
God. 3 For the time past may suffice to have wrought
the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in
lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, ca-
rousings, and abominable idolatries: 4 wherein they
think it strange that ye run not with them into the
same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: 5 who
shall give account to him that is ready to judge the
living and the dead. 6 For unto this end was the
gospel preached even to the dead, that they might
be judged indeed according to men in the flesh, but
live according to God in the spirit.

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye there-
fore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer:
8 above all things being fervent in your love among
yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins:
9 using hospitality one to another without murmur-
ing: 10 according as each hath received a gift, min-

istering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; 11 if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.—I PETER 3:13-4:11.

HOPE FOUNDED ON GRACE SATISFIES BECAUSE IT ROOTS IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER (3:13–4:11)

This entire section, the first division of which we study here, centres around Christian character, which is Christ-likeness or Christ in us. The balancing thoughts back and forth in this section are suffering and glory.

With the roots of our spiritual life in Christian character, which in turn roots in Christ, we have

PATIENCE IN SUFFERING (3:13–22)

Patience we must learn from God. Under suffering He alone can lift the heart above stoicism, man's best, to calm and tenseless submission illumined by a sublime trust; such is patience.

Persecution comes to all who live Godly in this hostile world-age. "Consecrate Christ as Lord in your hearts," then you can speak and live the answer to all gainsayings, "A good conscience is a great ally in every conflict." Meekness will contribute to a con-

science you can live with and will deliver you from "railing for railing," which genders bitterness.

In this present existence all mankind suffer; some for "evil-doing," some for "well-doing." If your lot is the latter you are to be envied, for you thereby put yourself into the class with Christ Jesus. He triumphed over suffering to bear "a good witness all through the ages and to rise victor over death in His resurrection." Follow Him through!

Just as God delivered His eight souls in Noah's day, so we can suffer and wait and trust Him fully to-day, having received the outward sign of the inward divine cleansing, even our "baptism," and being assured that He will complete every good work He has begun in us.

With the roots of our spiritual life in Christian conduct, we are also

CLEANSED THROUGH SUFFERING (4:1-11)

Suffering is not our curse, but our cleansing. Christlikeness is sure to issue in suffering. The prince of this world found nothing in Christ other than His holiness, and holiness and sin are sworn enemies eternally. The Christian's suffering for the Gospel's sake declares his break with and hostility to sin. Surely, therefore, the past days of lustful living, with all their sorrow and stain, shall henceforth be God's good ally to keep us from ever again seeking the paths that have left such scars on our soul.

The cleansed heart is cleansed "unto prayer" and fellowship with God, and brotherly love and "hospital-

ity" with our Christian brethren. God's cleansing makes us God's separated people, and encourages us to be good stewards of the sacred and most precious trust of the Gospel of grace.

Thus we are enabled to speak and minister in such manner and power that glory is given to God through Christ, Whose we are and Whom we serve.

We are depending upon every student's constantly lifting his eyes from the explanation of the text and the comments upon it to the text itself in order that the suggested truths may be coupled to the living revelation. While in the study of such a book as First Peter, one should literally live in the atmosphere of the epistle. Only by reading and rereading does this marvellous book yield its hidden treasure and golden nuggets.

The student should constantly refer to the outline of the epistle given among the first studies. This will help you to relate the immediate study in which you are engaged to the whole sweep of the book.

STUDY VII

Chapters 4:12–5:14

In this study we continue the key-thought of our last study which centred around the two factors of suffering and glory. Human thinking and standards would never couple together these two words. Only Christ can reveal the glory that follows suffering.

Our general theme of the epistle, "*Hope Founded*

on Grace Satisfies," is still strongly emphasized in this section of the book.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: 13 but inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy. 14 If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. 15 For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: 16 but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name. 17 For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God? 18 And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? 19 Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator.

1 The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested,

ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. 5 Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; 7 casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you. 8 Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9 whom withstand stedfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world. 10 And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. 11 To him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 By Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I account him, I have written unto you briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein. 13 She that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Mark my son. 14 Salute one another with a kiss of love.

Peace be unto you all that are in Christ—I PETER 4:12-5:14.

HOPE FOUNDED ON GRACE SATISFIES BECAUSE IT ROOTS IN CHRISTIAN CHARACTER, THAT IS, CHRISTLIKENESS (3:13–5:11)

SUFFERING AND GLORY

In our former study we have seen Christian character issuing and flowering into steadfastness, steady-

standing, patience in suffering. We further discovered that through suffering God can cleanse and purify and refine the gold of Christian faith. Here we face the heartening fact that Christian character enables us to be

REJOICING THROUGH SUFFERING (4:12-19)

This certainly marks us as " more than conquerors through him that loved us."

There is nothing strange or unexpected about Christ's children suffering. This was written in the contract. Peter, who knew the persecutions, the prison, the promised execution on the morrow, puts a wondrous glow upon suffering which almost startles us with surprise. In this part of the letter, close up to suffering, he constantly writes " rejoice," " glory," " rejoice with triumphant gladness."

If, because we are faithful and true to Him, the world brands us with its burning hatred, the only mark that can emerge when the hot, searing iron is lifted, is a cross. Concerning this branding Paul says, " Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus " (Galatians 6:7). Concerning the branding, Peter here writes, " rejoice," glorify God, for being permitted to bear that name and sign. If it takes the combined infinity of the Godhead to save and to bring into peace a lost soul, how hopeless is the estate of the irreligious and wilful enemy of God! " Wherefore, let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls in well-doing unto a faithful Creator." " Rejoice! "

With praise all along the pilgrim's pathway, Peter now lifts up his eyes to the jasper walls and catches glimpses of the glory which marks the morning land, and in an ecstasy of triumphant trust, he declares that we shall be

GLORIFIED AFTER SUFFERING (5:1-11)

He calls on the " elders " for faithfulness, identifying his ministry with theirs. He urges that they be shepherds of God's flock, " eagerly serving," not commercialized in their pastoral activities, but on the other hand tending the flock " with cheerful minds." They are never to be found " lording it over your churches but proving yourselves patterns for the flock to imitate." By and by the Chief Shepherd, Who laid down His life for the sheep, shall appear bringing His faithful ones a " fadeless crown."

Younger men must study humility and thus gain the alliance of both the elders and of God Himself. God, at the right time, will " set you on high." Do not be care-worn because you are a care-wearer; carrying care is Christ's prerogative; let us not dispute it with Him. Let us cast our every care upon Him and leave them there.

" The Devil," in his beastly intent, should have the effect upon the Christian of encouraging him to " soberness " and " watchfulness " and unyielding resistance; while they remember " your brethren in other parts of the world are passing through the same experiences." Be heartened also by recalling the fact that " God, the giver of all grace," has called you to share His eternal

glory through Christ. And that after you "have suffered for a little while" He Himself "shall perfact, establish, settle you . . . to him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen!"

CONCLUSION (5:12-14)

Silvanus is the bearer of this noble letter, which both exhorts us to believe and testifies that we may believe safely and rest assuredly upon the fact that this is "the true grace of God;" the foundation of our hope; therefore, "stand ye fast therein."

Then follows the Christian greetings from the elect in Babylon and from John Mark, who is a monument to the fact that under Christ a man can "come back." No marvel that John Mark and Simon Peter, kinsmen, were so closely allied; they knew the double welding of suffering and joy.

The epistle closes with the benediction so simple, so short, so sufficient, so satisfying: "Peace unto you all that are in Christ."

This closes our study of the First Epistle of Peter. Won't you go back and gather up its great drive, reading it with the theme throbbing through every verse? We ask you to take again the analytical outline of the book and read the book, section by section, as there divided. May something of the final satisfaction and peace that pulses through the pages of this epistle attend the hope of each reader and student, the hope that is founded on God's grace!

IV

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

STUDY I

THIS BRIEF, frank letter was penned by Simon Peter evidently near the end of his eventful life (1:14, 15). It is marked by the vigour and strong movement of this virile apostle. It follows in natural sequence upon First Peter, to which epistle he refers (3:1), and it is to be closely compared with Jude, as there is manifest oneness of thought in the two writings.

While this letter is written to the same Jews that were addressed in the first epistle, it has a distinctly separate and different objective. In the first letter those addressed were under the dire fire of persecution (I Peter 1:7; 4:12); whereas, in this present epistle the apostle finds his own beloved people exposed to false teachers, who are ready to wreck their faith (1:16; 2:1; 3:3). That he may foundation them and set their feet firmly again upon the "precious promises" and the tried faith, he writes this brief letter and thus rebulwarks the tested Christians of those trying, early days.

Notable it is that there is no gloom or sense of defeat in the apostle's message, though he is looking ap-

proaching death squarely in the face (1:14, 15). Determined to redeem the time, he projects himself, as protector of the faith of the Church, into all the coming centuries, by this epistle and its fearless apologetic. The end of life is the Christian's opportunity to witness his final and complete triumph. As intrepid Peter, so the Christian should continue the tenor of his way in faithful witnessing and courageous service, fixing his gaze far beyond the event of death upon the glories to be revealed; the certainty of the crowning day and our Lord's own glorious and conquering manifestation (3:10, 12).

The drive of the First Epistle of Peter was to conserve the steadiness of the early Christians under persecution and his climax was in his appeal, "Stand fast." Whereas in this second letter, with false teaching pressing in from every side, he urges upon his brethren their determined faithfulness to and feeding upon the truth, the "precious promises" of God, in order that they may "grow."

All the movement and the message of the letter centre in God's promises. These promises embody God's grace. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan remarks that grace is sufficient, but only operative when we obey its laws. "Knowledge" is a strong and frequent word in this letter, and as our first step Peter urges that we have the knowledge of God's promises, then we are to remember them, believe them, obey them, and thus we grow. Possibly we might state the underlying thought of the letter thus—God's promises believed, received, obeyed, make us God-like. We

study in the three chapters of this Second Epistle of Peter

The Transforming Power of Trusted Promises.

ANALYSIS AND OUTLINE OF SECOND PETER

Theme: God's Promises are sure—trust them and be transformed.

I. Salutation, 1:1-2. Author, those addressed, the blessing.

II. God's Transforming Promises, 1:3-11.

(A) The Promises—1:3-4.

(B) The Transformation—1:5-7.

(C) The Certain Issues—1:8-11.

III. In view of these trusted Promises we are Transformed by—

(A) Remembering and Heeding the Testimony—1:12-21.

(B) Refusing and Bewaring of False Teaching—2:1-22.

(C) Resisting and Evaluating the Mockeries—3:1-7.

(D) Responding to and Apprehending the Revelation—3:8-18.

As we enter this study of Second Peter may we ask you to read this tiny epistle three times. In reading the epistle, note the words " knowledge " and " knowing " and " remembering." Put yourself back into the atmosphere of the letter. A young, feeble band of

Christian Jews attacked by subtle as well as gross heresies which mark the determined effort of the Devil to unsettle the faith of the Church in its early beginning. Endeavour to sense just why Peter centres his thought on the promises of God. Let the impressiveness of his sense of life's remaining brevity give added import to the letter. Follow with him through sin's hideous, sordid, blighting wreckage. Let him forewarn and forearm you against the scoffer as he fixes your eyes upon the Lord Christ, who shall surely effect the consummation of all His glorious salvation and promises in His victorious return and full vindication of the faith of the fathers.

STUDY II

Chapter 1:1-11

In Study I, we discovered the central current of this little letter. Peter is not content merely to challenge the entrance of false teaching into the heart of the Christian. He would feed that heart positively and richly upon the promises of God. He is sure that such food will issue in the transformation of the life and in its inevitable and splendid growth. The theme of our book is

GOD'S PROMISES ARE SURE—TRUST THEM AND BE TRANSFORMED (1:4)

1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and

the Saviour Jesus Christ: 2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; 3 seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; 4 whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. 5 Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; 6 and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; 7 and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins. 10 Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: 11 for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—II Peter 1:1-11.

In our present study we have the salutation and the presentation of God's transforming promises.

I. SALUTATION (1:1-2)

"Simon Peter," thus the author declares himself,

and quite significant is the use of his double name. Christ, in John 1:42, declared, "Thou art Simon . . . thou shalt be Cephas, which is by interpretation Peter." The author holds on to "Simon" to keep himself humble, as it stirs many memories which successfully defeat threatening pride. He also holds bravely to "Peter," that he may have a constant consciousness of his assured victory. Strange as it may seem, these two names declare the transforming power of God's promises.

"Servant" and "apostle." Here again is a mighty brace of terms. He first registers himself as bond-slave to Jesus Christ. Every right in all his life is marked by the ownership of Jesus. Every room in his heart, including the throne-room, is not only open to but occupied by Jesus Christ. To this heart-loyalty he adds the term of his life-loyalty in his apostleship. As such he is one sent out and commissioned with a message from Jesus Christ proclaimed in the authority of his Master.

Those addressed are described as the ones that have obtained a "like precious faith with us." This matchless faith is precious to Him who bought it; is precious to us who have it; and is precious to every soul to whom we can give it. What a matchless description of Christians is this, "obtainers of precious faith"—yes, this faith is precious to them who sense what they were, whence they have been lifted, where they are, whither they journey, Who found, loved, lifted, holds them.

This "precious faith" has come to Christians

through and in " the righteousness of our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ." Peter would pause to mark the essential holiness of God in all His actions, including His matchless salvation, and to declare that this holiness inevitably expresses itself in action righteous.

With " grace " and " peace " he would bring God's blessing upon these threatened ones exposed to false teaching and teachers. Of course we have noted the order for " grace " must always issue in " peace." " Grace," God's unmerited favour, prompted by something entirely apart from us and entirely in His own holy and loving heart, brings into the human soul that sense of the final satisfaction of every true capacity, which sense we call " peace." This matchless possession issues from the " heart-knowledge " of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord.

II. GOD'S TRANSFORMING PROMISES (1:3-11)

(A) THE PROMISES (1:3-4)

From Him who with " divine power hath granted unto us all things " that have to do with " life and godliness " come these exceeding precious promises. Yea, they come from Him who sounds His call and claim through the " glory " we see Him wear and His unchallenged " virtue." From such an one as source came these promises. His promises are " precious and exceeding great." He sounds them out upon the ears and into the heart of men. When they are believed and received, received with a willing spirit and forever trusted, they make us to become " partakers of

the divine nature." And they deliver us from and fortify us against " the corruption that is in the world by lust."

Our Matchless Master is the Author of these promises. They are characterized as precious and exceeding great and their work in the willing heart is the work of transformation, whereby we participate in the divine nature. As Christ-likeness pre-empts new areas in the Christian's heart, he is delivered from and immunized to the virulent cankerous corruption that is in the world by lust.

(B) THE TRANSFORMATION (1:5-7)

Peter here points the process, the definite development from stage to stage, of the Christian's transformation. It is not as though we ascended eight separate steps, one after another; but each of these generic and glorious virtues is constantly climbing higher and higher in its control and blessing in the Christian heart.

Here is pictured matchless growth or " adding." As royal rulers accomplishing the purpose of Christ, the Lord of the heart, there is " faith," a final trust and a gladly bended will; " knowledge," intelligent, spiritual apprehension and evaluation of truth; " self-control," self-yielded to God's conscious and continual control; " patience," standing steady under affliction and tribulation, in impenetrable darkness and inexplicable experiences; " godliness," God-likeness; God in us, getting out through every avenue of our life, thus getting in touch with men; " brotherly kindness," the brotherliness of Jesus to us, breathing through our

word and touch with our Christian brother; "love," for God, for the brotherhood, for the world.

(C) THE CERTAIN ISSUES (1:8-11)

Having declared "the promises" and "the transformation," he now marks "the certain issues." He notes that if these mighty principles of the Christian faith are ours in abounding measure, that they make us to be "not idle," do-less, listless, lifeless; "nor unfruitful." An idle, fruitless life that claims to be Christian is the tragedy of the ages. One can read the disappointment on the face of the Nazarene, when He finds "nothing but leaves." In all His universe God is constantly moving toward "fruit," "more fruit," "much fruit." As both nature and God abhor a vacuum, so we may rest assured that our purposeful Redeemer is never satisfied with fruitless lives, having made full and costly provision for quite the contrary.

The lack of these things, thus carefully noted by Peter, declares one as "blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins." Spiritual myopia, near-sightedness, is a tragic affliction. For one who claims Jesus as Lord to fix his eyes downward upon the baubles and trinkets of life, which shall turn to ashes in life's testing hours, and to refuse to lift his face to the distant heights and the matchless glories beyond, is to render life cramped and constricted and to deny one's God-like capacities any range, expression or satisfaction.

So he appeals to the brethren that they shall "give

the more diligence " to confirm in their own hearts and the hearts of all men the certainty that they have been called and chosen by God. Such makes our feet like hinds' feet, they never slip, they " never stumble." The consummation of such a life is an " entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," supplied in all its rich abundance by Him who purchased it for us with His own precious blood.

Please use the outline given in Study I in this and in all subsequent studies, constantly referring to the divisions of the epistle. May we remind you that this is a series of studies and will only yield permanent knowledge and power to those who put their best mental and spiritual effort into it. Surely you will not forget to claim your only sufficient ally in all your study of God's Word. Unless the Holy Spirit shall open our hearts when we open the Book, God's truth, which is spiritually discerned, can never come in. If practical and demanding truths fix upon our own heart in our study, we are immediately to transform them from knowledge into life and practice, thus making them ours forever and insuring our giving them immediately away to others.

STUDY III

Chapter 1:12-21

In our former two studies in this little Epistle of

Second Peter, we have presented the analytical outline and the introductory movement of the book. We want to ask you again to refer to the outline that occurred in Study I, that you may keep the central movement of the book clearly in mind as you study the detailed treatment. The theme of our study—*God's Promises Are Sure; Trust Them and be Transformed*—should be in the conscious background for every student of us as we proceed on into this part of God's revelation.

Up to this time we have viewed God's transforming promises under the treatment: The Promises—The Transformation—The Certain Issues. In our succeeding studies we find how the transforming process is encouraged, sustained and accomplished in us as it was in the readers of this letter in the centuries gone.

12 Wherefore I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and are established in the truth which is with you. 13 And I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; 14 knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. 15 Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance. 16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there was borne such a

voice to him by the Majestic Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: 18 and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. 21 For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.—II Peter 1:12-21.

In the entire remainder of this book we are under the general division of the outline—III. *In View of These Trusted Promises we are Transformed by:*

(A) REMEMBERING AND HEEDING THE TESTIMONY (1:12-21)

Peter realizes the marvellous service of memory (verses 12, 13, 15). Those established in the truth have need at the hands of God's leaders that they be stirred up; our spiritual vitality has a tendency to subside, to run down, to yield to inertia. It is the counteracting process to which Peter sets his hand. Surely, the twice-born sons of God will never resent or resist this stirring process.

Peter bears his witness under pressure. God's workers push forward their program consciously under a westering sun. As Peter realizes that the day is closing in upon him, he seeks to finish his work and to perpetuate beyond his demise the actual influence of his spiri-

tual labours. There seems now to be echoing in this apostle's heart the words of Christ, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work." The "after-glow" of the Christian's witness is a beautiful and treasured possession of every faithful servant. Just as Jesus has touched an almost limitless circle of life since the close of His earthly ministry; just as Peter, through his epistles and the record of his discipleship, is ministering to millions to-day where he touched hundreds in the days of his flesh; so there are other sainted dead, thank God, who, following in these footsteps, still stretch out hands mighty to guide our earthly pathway and speak the message of God's grace and salvation even more clearly than words and human lips could sound. Viewing the end of life as near at hand produced nothing of terror or confusion in Peter's mind and heart, but only steadied him to the full and rich completion of his God-given stewardship.

The testimony, for the remembering and heeding of which Peter is pleading and labouring, is contrasted with "cunningly devised fables." Such fables are the best that the heathen has. These fables mark his feeling after God. They also mark the vast and vital areas concerning which he knows nought. Can we estimate the guiding and comforting power of our clear knowledge concerning life's deepest and most vital questions? "Whence did we come?" "Who are we?" "Why are we here?" "How long do we stay?" "Whither do we go?" All these questions pulse through the human mind, crying for an answer.

In Jesus Christ, the living Revelation, and in the Bible, the written revelation, we have the testimony. "Remember it," says Peter, "and heed its claim."

Thoughtful, practical Peter then proceeds to substantiate and foundation his testimony. He declares himself an eye-witness of the majesty, the power and the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. He further declares himself to be an ear-witness of the voice of God attesting this matchless Christ. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He evidently refers to his experience upon the Mount of Transfiguration, where he received indelibly fixed in memory, the most supernal and majestic impressions, of Christ's glorious Deity, of which the human mind is capable. Vivid it is, though the years many have come and gone full of exacting experiences. He, together with James and John, looked upon the essential outshining of Jesus' sinlessness and holiness and he beheld what would have been the normal experience of sinless humanity; *i. e.,* translation into God's presence, acceptable and well-pleasing to God Himself.

He notes, however, a strange and gripping sequel. Jesus is in conference with Moses and Elijah, concerning His exodus, His "way out." This exodus laid its claims upon the Sinless One because every other member of the human family was sinful. Jesus, in the effulgence of His holiness, in conference with "the law" and "the prophets," maps out the way to Calvary and to the coming upon Him of the sin of the world. No marvel that God breaks forth out of the cloud in divine rejoicing in such a Son. Some day,

because of the " exodus " of Jesus, His believing ones shall experience their exodus and shall themselves be presented to God without spot or wrinkle or blemish or any such thing; guiltless in His imputed sufferings, sinless in His imputed righteousness. To such a testimony, surely we do well to take heed!

He closes the thought, declaring again that the Word of prophecy has been made more sure, appealing to the faithful followers of Jesus to take heed unto the radiance of His presence, of His atonement, of His sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, as men look up out of a dark place to a brilliantly shining light. In this light, quite sufficient, we are to walk until the day dawns and the day star arises in our hearts. One day our dimness shall be taken away. Face to face we shall see Him in that land of which the Lamb is the light.

In closing, he further reminds his readers and us that no prophecy is the work of the prophet unaided or produced on the purely human level. As it was necessary that the Holy Spirit should indite the message through His servants to the Church, so it is essential that He shall illumine the mind of the Church that they may know the significance of the message. Thus, in exhorting Christians to remember and heed the testimony, he would always summon as the only sufficient ally in such an undertaking the Holy Spirit of God.

Peter, in this study, is dealing with the vast reaches of our ultimate faith and with the lengths to which God

has gone in producing a divinely attested revelation. We urge every student, personally, alone, consciously fellowshipping with God's Holy Spirit, to get his feet forever and finally fixed upon God's testimony to His Son. This is quite fundamental. This is rigorously demanded if we are to stand amidst the currents of critical, radical, ungodly thought to-day. May the Holy Spirit stir up all our spiritual energies anew, and fix our faith in the God-attested testimony.

STUDY IV

Chapter 2

In our last study we found Peter pushing up into prominence, for the Christian's thoughtful consideration, the testimony, the God-attested testimony, the testimony which Peter himself received as an eye-witness and as an ear-witness. In this study, which covers the second chapter of the epistle, we find him sounding the tocsin, the warning bell, against the insidious and vicious inroads of false teaching.

There is not and never has been and never will be any successful compromise or co-operation between truth and error. This is true because this is God's universe in which we live, and God is truth.

1 But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies,

denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. 2 And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. 3 And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not. 4 For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 5 and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly; 7 and delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds): 9 the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment; 10 but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement, and despise dominion. Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at dignities: 11 whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgment against them before the Lord. 12 But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed, 13 suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing; men that count it

pleasure to revel in the daytime, spots and blemishes, revelling in their deceivings while they feast with you; 14 having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; enticing unstedfast souls; having a heart exercised in covetousness; children of cursing; 15 forsaking the right way, they went astray, having followed the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the hire of wrong-doing; 16 but he was rebuked for his own transgression: a dumb ass spake with man's voice and stayed the madness of the prophet. 17 These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm; for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved. 18 For, uttering great swelling words of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error; 19 promising them liberty, while they themselves are bondservants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage. 20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. 21 For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. 22 It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to the wallowing in the mire.—II PETER, CHAPTER 2.

In view of these trusted promises, Peter further affirms that we are transformed by

(B) REFUSING AND BEWARING OF FALSE TEACHING (2:1-22)

Peter recognizes the presence of false prophets and teachers in all ages among God's people. The word "heresy," in its original significance, seems to imply "the choosing" of a wrong way. If there is just one right way, one safe way, over a dangerous mountain, it makes very little difference which one of the wrong ways men may choose. One wrong way may be superior intrinsically to another way, ending, however, in the same certain disaster. This is a fair pictorial statement of heresies. This is also a frank declaration of the true narrowness of Christianity. Jesus declares, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Have a care that you do not make Christianity any broader than Christ makes it. Its breadth is universal in its invitation and appeal and power, but its course is narrow. There is but one entrance, that is the Lamb of God, Jesus, the sacrifice for sin. There is but one course, and that is obedience to God's revealed will. Destructive heresies allure from the single path, blur the thinking of men, deaden their sensibilities, destroy their testimony, and jeopardize their eternal interest.

Note the descriptive words and phrases which Peter uses in enlarging upon "destructive heresies" and "false teachers":—"lascivious," "covetous," "Sodom and Gomorrah," "after the flesh," "in the lust of defilement," "despised dominion," "daring, self-willed," "creatures without reason," "mere ani-

mals to be taken and destroyed," " railing in matters whereof they are ignorant and in their destroying shall surely be destroyed." Thus he piles up the vicious assets of error in its soiling and menacing factors and its defiance of and blasphemy against God.

He refers, as the Scriptures do in other places, to " the way of Balaam." He was an outstanding false prophet. The distinctive error which he taught Israel was that, because they were the chosen people, they could safely mingle and mix with sin and remain undefiled. Such vicious prating a dumb ass challenged, speaking with more wisdom than a venial false prophet.

He then depicts the utter fruitlessness and barrenness and desolation and hopelessness of the issue of error, its climax being " the blackness of darkness " forever.

He unsparingly exposes the fallacies of this spiritual " liberty," falsely so-called, showing that sin is a cunning and mighty tyrant and that its bondslavery is bitterness indeed.

In closing this desperately frank and awful description he strongly affirms the responsibility of knowledge. He shows that truth presented, heard and understood always entails a radical responsibility. He warns against turning back from the holy commandment and shows that such is spiritual treason, declares that their hidden heart is not that of a lamb, which though it may fall into the mire will never abide contented there; but is the heart of a sow which gladly returns to her wallowing in the mire; or the heart of a dog, turning again

to his own vomit. The nastiness, the pollution, the degradation of sin needs to be fairly and frankly faced by God's people. To speak of sin as "the error of mortal mind," toning it down with effeminate and bloodless language, is to insult God, both in His mental and moral capacities, and to mark ourselves as an easy and willing prey to our most relentless and direst foe, Satan.

May I lay upon every student that he personally deal with the problem projected in this study? The day in which we live not only decries the degradation of sin but toys with it, oftentimes honours and exalts the monster himself. There is no explanation of God's willingness to give Christ and of Christ's willingness to give Himself in such a salvation as is revealed in the Bible, apart from the infinite seriousness and heinousness of sin.

Remember to refer, please, to the analytical outline and mark the movement of the epistle as thus far studied.

STUDY V

Chapter 3

As we draw to the close of this searching study of the Second Epistle of Peter, may we request the student to look back through the preceding studies that you may enter upon this closing lap of the race possessed of all the momentum which Peter has gathered

for us in the first two chapters. Our general theme is *God's Promises Are Sure—Trust Them and be Transformed.* After the salutation we studied God's transforming promises and their certain issues in verses 3–11 of the first chapter. The entire remainder of the book is divided into four parts with one general thought—*In View of These Trusted Promises we are Transformed by:*

A. Remembering and Heeding the Testimony (1:2-21)

B. Refusing and Bewaring of False Teaching (2:1-22)

In this study we take the two remaining divisions.

1 This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance; 2 that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles: 3 knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, 4 and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5 For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; 6 by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7 but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

8 But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11 Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, 12 looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight. 15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. 17 Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness. 18 But grow in the

grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen.—II PETER, CHAPTER 3.

In View of These Trusted Promises, we are Transformed by:

(C) RESISTING AND EVALUATING THE MOCKERIES (3:1-7)

The movement of Peter's thought is evident. Having projected the attested testimony, and having warned against the insidious heresies, he now depicts the scornful and blatant attitude of sin as it mocks God and God's truth and God's children.

Peter here refers to this as his " Second Letter " and declares that his aim in both of them is to " stir up your sincere mind, having put you in remembrance that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord, our Saviour, through your apostles." He assures them that he is simply reiterating that which they should already well know from prophetic or apostolic sources; yea, from Christ Himself.

He declares that the last days shall be marked by mockers " walking after their own lusts." These mockeries show clearly the value of comment and criticism upon spiritual things by carnally minded worldlings. The tragic marvel of it all is that God's redeemed children should ever even listen to the evaluation of spiritual things by natural worldlings, who are spiritually dead. The value of the comment that comes from our

cemeteries upon the pressing experiences of our age is no more nil and silent than the comment of the carnally minded upon God, God's doings, God's dealings, God's promises and God's revelation; is utterly senseless and void. These spiritual things are spiritually discerned and therefore can neither be known nor in any wise explained by those who are spiritually blind, perverted, dead.

All the ages have produced their mockers; their words are filled with sophistry, and they wilfully forget and deliberately turn away from and decry the obvious facts of God, His Person, and Presence and Revelation.

Because in their day no cataclysmic changes are experienced, they belittle belief in any past or future radical interference by God with the level of human procedure. The Psalmist describes them, "The men who have no changes and who fear not God" (Psalm 55:19). Whereas the preacher in Ecclesiastes describes them, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:11). They wilfully forget, for example, the flood, which is not only recorded in God's revelation but in the ancient history and mythology of many nations.

They scoff regarding the return and Person of our Lord, asking, "Where is the promise of his coming? For from the day the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." Blinding their poor eyes and minds to God's

ceaseless and marvellous efforts to declare Himself and to show His hand and heart to men, they pronounce upon themselves a destiny of doom and destruction.

(D) RESPONDING TO AND APPREHENDING THE REVELATION (3:8-18)

Not only do these mockers forget that with God there is no such thing as the limitation of time to which our life is scheduled; for with Him one day and a thousand years are the same, and all eternity is actually present to Him always; but they show themselves to be poor, deluded humanity, tiny, distorted specks in God's great universe; vaunting themselves in carnal pride against the Eternal One. What a spectacle! This is the perfect work of sin. Naturally, in their darkened and distorted minds they confuse God's long-suffering with inability or "slackness." Because God is patient and merciful, they think He is asleep and impotent. The very thing that they mock at and seek to make light of, *i. e.*, the marvellous mercy of our God, is the only thing in the universe that stays God's hand from summary punishment and dire destruction upon them. How completely, pitifully misguided and sin-deceived hearts can overreach their own highest interest!

"But the day of the Lord will come." About this Peter is sure. He depicts the mighty, accompanying events, "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise." "The heavenly bodies shall be dissolved with fervent heat." "The earth and the works that are

therein shall be burned up." There shall be "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." How the majesty, the eternal glory and power of God move steadily forward to God's purposed consummation in the presence of the senseless pratings of reprobate minds!

Peter makes his personal application and appeal to his readers then and now in the question which he propounds in view of these mighty, colossal, coming experiences. "What manner of person ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God?" He further enjoins that all Christians shall give diligence that they may be "found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight."

He refers to the writings of Paul, which we have preserved in the Pauline Epistles, and notes that there are many deep sayings in these writings which are wrested by the ignorant and unsteadfast, who treat all the other Scripture in the same manner, to their own destruction. Paul thus bears his witness in confirmation to Peter's claims here given.

As he closes this little letter, having appealed to them in his fiirst epistle that they shall "Stand fast," he here exhorts them that in view of the promises of God, which are sure and which transform all who trust them, they shall "grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." In the First Epistle of Peter he bids them "Stand." In the Second Epistle he urges them to "Grow." Giving all glory, both now and forever, to our only Lord and

Saviour, Jesus Christ, he pronounces the "Amen" upon his message.

Please do not close this series of studies in Second Peter without a thoughtful review of the drive and movement of the facile pen and searching thought of this mighty transformed man, who found all life changed within and without, under the fellowship of Jesus Christ. Having our memories stirred afresh concerning these precious promises, and being assured of their certainty, let us trust them and entrust ourselves to Him Who gave them, knowing that in His hands they shall be used to transform us into His own likeness.

V

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

STUDY I

THE AUTHOR of this epistle, and the two brief letters that follow (II and III John), is the beloved Apostle John, the son of Zebedee and Salome. He was also a "son of thunder" (Mark 3:17). This John, the man with a great temper and one ready for hasty violence, is often forgotten and overshadowed in our thinking by the John he became, who described himself as "that disciple whom Jesus loved." It was this "son of thunder" who was ready to call down destructive fire upon a Samaritan village when his Lord and the disciples companying with Him were denied the village hospitality. It was also this same John who truculently "forbade" a certain disciple of Christ, whom he found engaged in Christian work, when he refused to follow with him and adopt his methods and obey his plans.

But John, the "son of thunder," became John "the beloved apostle" and a "son of consolation," and "the singer of love;" under the touch and transforming fellowship of Jesus. John's transformation is almost as radical as Peter's. When his superb natural powers were harnessed and controlled by Jesus, he

became one of the foremost apostles, a man mighty with God and with men, and the author of The Revelation, these three epistles and the Gospel which bears his name. He probably outlived all of his fellow-apostles, and, doubtless, proved in his own experience the fact that it is no less exacting to live for Christ than to wear the martyr's crown.

According to the best historical traditions John left Jerusalem about 67 A. D., spending some years in exile for the faith on the isle of Patmos; and while in exile penned that marvellous book which closes the Christian canon of Scripture—The Revelation. Later he seems to have gone to Ephesus and remained there as pastor and preacher and beloved father of his people till his death, about the close of the first century. This church at Ephesus was founded by Paul, probably in 55 A. D.

This little letter that we study was written from Ephesus between 85 and 95 A. D., for the purpose of complementing his Gospel. It was written, as was his Gospel, to Christians distinctly. They are named as "children" (2:1), "young men" (2:13), "fathers" (2:13). Thus addressing a message to Christian "fathers," "young men" and "children," he completes the circle of the Christian home. His message, therefore, is to all Christians, to any life that is hid with Christ in God.

The introduction does not mention those addressed nor the author's name. The movement of the introduction is to give the character and the authenticity and the purpose of the letter. John declares that his

message is the message of an " ear " witness, an " eye " witness, and a " hand " witness.

This epistle was written to neutralize the heresies then current, many of which persist to this day; and to establish Christians in the truth about the Person, the Deity, and the salvation of Jesus Christ, and to crystallize the faith of Christians into knowledge. All of these are presented in order that power and peace in the Christian life may be secured.

Does the reader know that he is saved? Have you the assurance of salvation? Can you have it? Should you have it? The practical objective of this letter, from John's pen under the control of the Holy Spirit, is to bring to pass in the believer's heart a conscious knowledge and assurance and final certainty of the possession of eternal life. We are saved by believing, by personal faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and our Saviour; but peace and power in Christian living and serving only come with the assurance of salvation. Without any unseemliness we can openly declare that we know we are saved. For this distinct and declared purpose the epistle of First John was written. We not only may know, and can know, but we ought to know that we are saved if we have believed on Jesus Christ the Son of God and have accepted him as both Saviour and Lord (5:13).

The theme of this epistle of First John is: *Conscious Fellowship with God Through Christ Yields Fulness of Joy,* and we find this theme bulwarked by the following references: 1:3 and 4; 5:13.

The movement of the book is manifest. Throughout

its pages John frequently refers to the antecedent and implied relationship of our believing. From this point the epistle moves steadily through the fellowship with Christ to the knowledge of the possession of eternal life, which makes this fellowship endless and which breathes into the believer's soul fulness of joy. The resultant experience in the Christian's heart and life is one of peace and power. The conscious present possession of eternal life, which is nurtured by our fellowship unhindered with God through Christ, fruits in every life into an abiding joy, which joy is the final and complete satisfaction of all our spiritual capacities. This, of course, brings quietness and peace and such poise of life that we have power with God and man.

The movement in brief seems to be, believe and be saved; have fellowship and know. Then there shall flood the life God's peace, and His divine energy shall mark our efforts for success, as judged by His own eternal values. This is joy which is joy indeed.

In preparation for our succeeding studies, and especially for Study II, please read this brief epistle three times. Make up your mind that you are going to find out what John is seeking to tell you. Read it as though you were going to report on it to the man who wrote it. Ponder passages that seem to be pregnant with the greater truths. Make notes, as you read, of the drift and movement of the book.

We try not to be unreasonable in our requests of the

student, but we know that the benefit that you will derive from following this study course will be in direct proportion to the time that you give to the study of the text itself.

STUDY II

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

The analytical outline of any book is the logical arrangement of its inter-related thoughts, as they bulwark the central theme of the book. This study, therefore, is the key-study of all. Constantly refer to your analytical outline, familiarize yourself with its great divisions, and study the text as the subdivisions direct and lead your thought.

The distinctive feature of this series of Bible studies is that it is one grouped around a logical analysis and a central theme. Our analysis is not the only analysis of the book, and we would not claim that it is the best, but it's the best that we can give, and if it should stimulate you to the working out of your own analysis and your own theme, its purpose would be doubly accomplished.

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE OF FIRST JOHN

Theme: Conscious Fellowship with God Through Christ Yields Fulness of Joy, 1:3, 4; 5:13.

I. Introduction—1:1-4.

Eternal life is manifested, attested, shared:
Therefore, there is fellowship and joy.

II. Walking in the light means fellowship and joy, 1:5–2:29—Key verse 1:7.

GOD IS LIGHT

1—We deal with sin if we walk in the light—1:5-10.

2—We exalt obedience if we walk in the light—2:1-17.

3—We discern antichrist if we walk in the light—2:18-29.

III. Loving God and man means fellowship and joy, 3:1–4:21—Key verse 4:21.

GOD IS LOVE

1—God's children love holiness—3:1-12.

2—God's children love the brotherhood—3:13-24.

3—God's children know and love the truth—4:1-6.

4—God's children love God—4:7-21.

IV. Knowing the possession of eternal life by faith means fellowship and joy, 5:1-21—Key verse 5:13.

GOD IS LIFE

1—The possession of Jesus is necessary to the possession of eternal life—5:1-12.

2—The knowledge of the possession of eternal life means peace and power—5:13-17.

V. Conclusion, 5:18-21.

The two eternal realities, life and death.

With this outline before us, and with the movement of the epistle clearly in mind, I want to bring you now

to a brief comparison between the Gospel of John and his First Epistle. In the Gospel the call is, "believe and have eternal life." In the epistle it is, "know the possession of eternal life and have peace and power." While in the Gospel eternal life is manifested in the Son of God, in the epistle eternal life is manifested in the sons of God. The urge of the Gospel seems to be, see the signs, believe and be saved. While the epistle urges Christians to sense the life, know and have joy and peace. The progress in these two writings is very logical and quite manifest. They complement each other. The Gospel is the root. The epistle is the fruit. The movement of the Gospel is incomplete without the epistle. The movement of the epistle is impossible without the Gospel.

Some one has made a very helpful statement which is clearly reflected in our present study. This is the thought suggested: For the Christian, our *Safety* depends on Christ's work for us. This is something entirely outside of ourselves. This is the matchless thing that He has wrought on the Cross, and concerning which He says, "it is finished." Our safety is dependent upon that, and that alone, and this work we receive by faith. Our *Certainty* depends on Christ's word to us. Our assurance is wrapped up with the testimony of Jesus and the truth of the revelation. We are made sure of salvation by the record that Christ has given us. As the Word of God is sure and abideth forever, then we can have final assurance now of our salvation. Our *Enjoyment* depends upon our obedience to Christ. An entirely new phase of relationship

is here introduced. While safety and certainty depend severally upon Christ's work for us, and Christ's word to us, our enjoyment of salvation, our happiness in the faith, our delight in Christian privilege, our spiritual health; depend upon our obedience to Christ. There can be no joy and no vigour and health of spiritual life while there is conscious disobedience. If we think this through, we shall be glad that it is true.

We ask you again to read this epistle with the following thoughts in view:

First read it with the contrasts in mind as they are presented—" light " and " darkness," " love " and " hate," " life " and " death."

Then read the epistle with just one word in your mind; " love."

Then read the epistle with another word in mind, marking it as you did the word " love," that is the word " know." Also note as you read, the occurrence of the words: " fellowship," " joy," " truth," " righteousness," " world," " overcome."

And last of all, may we ask you to read this epistle the fourth time with the outline before you, reading each division as it is marked for you in the outline.

STUDY III

Chapter 1

Your response in the four readings, requested in the

last study, will prepare you vitally for taking up now the actual study of the text. Even at the risk of wearying you, we again urge constant reference to the analytical outline. That is the distinctive thing in this method of Bible study, and we want it to count just as heavily as possible in the permanent impressions and abiding issues of the study.

1 That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life 2 (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); 3 that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: 4 and these things we write, that our joy may be made full.

5 And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.—I JOHN, CHAPTER 1.

The study of the first chapter of the epistle covers the introduction, verses 1-4, and a part of the first great division of the book, treated under the caption: Walking in the light means fellowship and joy. This great division covers chapters 1 and 2. The sub-title, covering verses 5-10 of chapter 1, is: We deal with sin if we walk in the light. Throughout this entire division we have constantly presented to us the pivotal thought: *God is light.*

I. INTRODUCTION (1:1-4). ETERNAL LIFE IS MANIFESTED, ATTESTED, SHARED: THEREFORE, THERE IS FELLOWSHIP AND JOY

The arresting and captivating word, with its limitless content which centres and sources the thought of the introduction, is life, the life, the eternal life. Regarding the witness that the writer is about to bear to this transcendent factor—the eternal life—he declares that he is an " ear " witness, for he has heard; he is an " eye " witness, for he has seen; he is a " hand " witness, for he has handled—the word of life.

If the student will at this point turn back to the Gospel according to John and read the first seven verses of the first chapter, there will come a flood of light upon the brief, pregnant introduction that John gives to his first epistle. John desires to qualify as authoritative before he releases the majestic content of his message.

The first distinctive declaration about this eternal life is that it has been " manifested," that it has been brought out into such bold relief and expressed in such

terms that man can know it; that just as the witness "heard" and "saw" and "handled" so surely can the reader verify the reality of this eternal life. He does not pause here to elaborate the thought, that the eternal life has been made manifest through the Logos, the Word, the expression of God, the Son of God, Jesus the Christ coming in the flesh. As we have seen in our study, the drive to establish the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Son of God, occupied all the main arteries of movement in the Gospel of John; here the impact is for the advanced purpose of knowing the possession of eternal life, because of the exercise of faith in this Christ as the Son of God. He got down where we can get at Him so that He might get at us and lift us up to Himself.

The next marvellous declaration is that the eternal life is "shared" with us. As he declares an underlying purpose in the manifestation; namely, "that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." John having "heard," "seen," "handled" the manifested eternal life, the Christ of God, believed, and immediately was made possessor of the experience of fellowship, of sharing in that eternal life. His tremendous objective in writing this little letter is to enlarge the number of the conscious possessors of fellowship.

He is quite confident that such an experience will fill to the limit every capacity that man has for "joy." In the ever enlarging sense of this possession, eventually every chord will vibrate and the inner being of the

soul will be set to singing. Life will be symmetrical and exceeding rich and ultimate in its satisfaction for every soul who has conscious fellowship in the eternal life, with the eternal Son.

II. WALKING IN THE LIGHT MEANS FELLOWSHIP AND JOY (1:5–2:29)

GOD IS LIGHT

WE DEAL WITH SIN IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT (1:5-10)

What a chilling contrast! Out of the warmth and glow of a heavenly fellowship we descend to the drab, soiled scenes of sin; but sin, as with a flaming sword, stands at the threshold of the temple of fellowship with God, and it must be faced and dealt with.

It is brought out in boldest relief by the matchless description of God in verse 5, in which the herald announces: "God is light and in him is no darkness at all." This sets Him definitely apart from us in complete and desperate contrast and conflict, yet resolutely the writer turns from this sun-lit declaration of the character of God and faces our stained and bedraggled, contrasted estate. He declares that for us to have fellowship with Him (the echoes of the preciousness is still ringing in our ears from the introductory paragraph), we must walk where God dwelleth, and that is, in light. If we claim fellowship with Him and walk anywhere else [everywhere else is darkness], we lie, and our deeds confirm the falsehood.

Why should we shrink from walking in the light?

Could there be a more foolish question? We shrink from walking in the light because light exposes sin. Ladened with loathsome diseases, in spiritual rags, vermin-covered with repulsive creatures clinging to us, we naturally shun, fear, hate light. And we shall forever abide in darkness unless there is some remedy final for the sin question. The same author recognizes it when he declares: "and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

We cannot deny the fact of sin nor can we deceive ourselves into believing that it is not our sins. If we deny the fact of sin we are utter strangers to all truth even on the human level. But John declares, and the declaration is like the warm glow of the sunlight breaking through the threatening cloud: "If we confess our sins he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Thus, and thus only, sinful man can come into the light where alone there is to be found fellowship with God. Apart from this fellowship, consciously possessed and constantly exercised, there is no abiding joy in all the universe for the soul of man with its spiritual capacities.

However full of deception and falsehood we may be by nature, as he closes this chapter and paragraph, John seems to cry aloud: "Don't make God a liar!" Don't make God a liar by denying our sin or by denying His Son. When we confess our sin and when we claim His Son we are taking the first, the sure steps out into the light where we can have conscious fellow-

ship with Him; where joy continually is at high-tide; and where we begin to feel within us the pulsings of the life, the eternal life.

I am sure you will recall in this study that our general theme throughout the epistle is: "Conscious fellowship with God through Christ yields fulness of joy." And John, brave John, controlled by a quiet courage, unwilling to hide from himself or from his readers and knowing that he cannot hide from God, the awful fact of sin; deals with it finally and fully as he moves forth in proclaiming the fundamental basis for this conscious fellowship.

Will you not now turn quietly back to the beginning of this little epistle, read thoughtfully through the first chapter, seeking to see, with the eye and mind of the Spirit, the mighty truths with which the words are laden? Will you not, in fellowship with that same Spirit, deal with your sin, your individual sin, your conscious sin, as the elemental step toward conscious fellowship with the Sinless One?

Our next study is of chapter 2. Please come to the study quite familiar with the movement of the chapter by reading it at least three times.

STUDY IV

Chapter 2

With the threefold revelation of God in the statement—God is light, God is love, God is life—John, in this little epistle, is moving toward the spiritual posi-

tion of "conscious fellowship." His passion for the Christian is that he shall have the power in service and the capacity for service, which alone come with the knowledge and assurance of salvation.

He is recognizing the agelong truth that apart from God man's life is hopelessly limited and marred. The central theme-thought for the book, as you recall, is: "Conscious fellowship with God through Christ yields fulness of joy." In this conscious fellowship we find that God is light, fully revealing all that is twisted and marred and stained in the human soul, and bringing out man's condition in dark and bold relief over against His own holiness. We further find, and that with joy of soul, that God is love, and that divine and infinite love has found a way for marred and stained life to be reconciled with our Holy Father. In the last movement of the book we find that God is life, and that we are to consciously share in His eternal life. Spiritual death, which by nature has passed upon all men, rendering them irresponsive to and uncontrolled by the principles of spiritual life, is forevermore broken in its power by our new spiritual birth, regeneration, the work of the Holy Spirit. We are thereby brought into indissolvable union with the life of the ages.

1 My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. 3 And hereby we know that we know him, if we

keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: 6 he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.

7 Beloved, no new commandment write I unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye heard. 8 Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth. 9 He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.

12 I write unto you, my little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him who is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one. I have written unto you, little children, because ye know the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know him who is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one. 15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

18 Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they are all not of us. 20 And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also. 24 As for you, let that abide in you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise which he promised us, even the life eternal. 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that would lead you astray. 27 And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him. 28 And now, my little children, abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have

boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. 29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him.—I JOHN, CHAPTER 2.

In our last study under the caption, "Walking in the light means fellowship and joy" (1:5–2:29), we found that "We deal with sin if we walk in the light." We now come to the practical application of all the demands upon us for walking in the light.

WE EXALT OBEDIENCE IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT (2:1-17)

In this chapter John names those to whom he is writing the letter: "my little children" (v. 1); "fathers," "little children," "young men" (vs. 12-14). He distinctly declares in the first verse of the chapter why he is writing: "These things write I unto you that ye may not sin." We must never forget that just as truly as God has made provision for us if we sin, He has also made provision for us not to sin. The great work of sanctification is the recognition of God's provision, made through Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, for men to grow as overcomers of sin. In the Divine Spirit the Christian steadily advances into new areas wrested from the tyranny of sin in his own heart and life. Strange as it may seem, many good people to-day are far more afraid of "holiness" than they are of "sinfulness;" and the shameful tragedy of it all is that Christians become apparently contented with a low level of life and make the actual battle between the old nature and the new

an excuse for the continuing in sins from which God can deliver.

If the Christian does sin, John declares that this does not mean that he is not a Christian; but that he is a disobedient Christian, and that he can claim the Advocate, Christ, Who has the infinite propitiation, Himself, to offer in his behalf. John, however, drives swiftly toward the great positive objective for the Christian; namely, obedience. He frankly and startlingly declares that any man who says that he knows Christ and still continues in willing, known sin and open disobedience "is a liar and the truth is not in him" (v. 4). He sums up the magnificent double assurance in this demanding statement: "And hereby we know that we know him if we keep his commandments." God's love is having its perfect work in the obedient life.

This unquestioning obedience, this walking in the light, means loving God and loving our fellow-men (vs. 7-11). Hatred harboured in human hearts, whatever claims we may lay to fellowship with God, declares that "we are in the darkness," and that we are as a man that "walketh in darkness and knoweth not whither he goeth because the darkness hath blinded his eyes." Our Christian life becomes blinded, groping, stumbling and an "occasion of stumbling" for others when we harbour hatred in the heart in direct disobedience not only to God's commandment but to His glorious treatment of us.

In the concluding section of this division, "we exalt obedience if we walk in the light," John is determined

to find out Who is King (vs. 12-17). If God, Who is light, is King; then the world, which is darkness, cannot dictate the doings of our hands and hearts. These two kingdoms are mutually exclusive, and our lives are inescapably linked with one or the other. John makes his appeal to the whole Christian Church: " little children," " young men," " fathers," declaring that each one has a distinctive privilege and responsibility in the program of Christ. With marvellous fulness and finality he sounds the call to the separated life.

He unmasks sin in its threefold universal approach. We will remember " the lust of the flesh " as it lifted its hideous head in the garden of Eden, where it appeared as " good for food." We also recall that our Master, Who faced temptation in all points, was first confronted with the appeal to His famished body in the temptation to command that the stones be made " bread." " The lust of the eyes " is easily recognized in the garden of Eden when the fruit of the tree was " a delight to the eyes." More subtle, and yet easily discernible to the eye of faith, is the same temptation applied to our Lord when Satan " showeth him the kingdoms." " The pride of life," or " the vainglory of life," is clearly seen in the declaration with regard to the Eden temptation, " that the tree was to be desired to make one wise;" and, again in Christ's wilderness temptation and testings, we find Satan saying to Him that if He is the Son of God He should prove it by obeying his command, " cast thyself down " from the pinnacle of the temple.

John declares that this world and all the lusts and desires thereof are transient and shall pass away; but the obedient Christian, "he that doeth the will of God," abideth forever.

WE DISCERN ANTICHRIST IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT (2:18-29)

If we walk in the light and fellowship with God, Who is light, we shall have discernment and shall know how to sense false teachers and to separate between truth and error. In this paragraph John throws some very arresting light upon the essential nature of "antichrist." He declares that many antichrists have already arisen and that their appearance portends "the last hour." Christians are enabled to make discriminating distinctions in spiritual things because they "have an anointing from the Holy One." It is the indwelling Spirit of God Who reveals to our spirits antichrist and all movements in philosophy, education, business and life which are hostile to the presence and reign of Christ.

Succinctly and yet with marvellous clearness John describes antichrist. It is he who "denieth that Jesus is the Christ." "This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. He that confesseth the Son hath the Father also" (vs. 22, 23). Lay over against this matchless statement of the essential Deity of Jesus and its recognition, necessary for Christian faith, the statement in John's Gospel (5:23): "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the

Father that sent him." We see that all effort of God's ancient people, the Jew, to honour Jehovah, while they dishonour Messiah, Christ, or of any modern sect, Gentile or Jew, who would claim to worship God, while they deny the essential Deity of His Son Jesus Christ, are not only doomed to dire disappointment but are identifying their efforts with antichrist movements.

One of the key-words toward the close of this paragraph is "abide." If we show heart-hospitality to the revelation which we have heard, then we ourselves shall find heart-hospitality in the Son and in the Father Himself. This is just another definition of the possession of eternal life which declares itself also in "fellowship and joy." From this "abiding" heart-hospitality, we shall have boldness and not be ashamed at our meeting with Christ and at His coming and presence. We know the character of God, "that he is righteous," and we know the character of man, that he is by nature unrighteous. From these two facts we come inevitably to the apostle's conclusion that whosoever loves and lives in righteousness does so because he has been begotten of God and born again unto newness of life. The distressing converse is just as true, that whosoever liveth in and loveth evil thereby declares that he can lay no claim to God's parentage and that he is not abiding in Christ, nor is Christ and His power abiding in him.

Read again now chapter 2 with its radical revelation and seek to follow, step by step, the procedure of the author's thought as he is led by the Holy Spirit. Then

let us apply its demands to our own life that God may make practical this study for our soul's good.

Our next study will cover chapter 3. We ask you to read it at least twice before you take up the study; also reading the entire epistle under the guidance of the analytical outline. In chapter 3, we find that God's children love holiness and that they also love the brotherhood.

STUDY V

Chapter 3

With our last study we closed the grand division of this book which includes 1:5–2:29—Walking in the light means fellowship and joy—God is light. We found that if we step out into the light and dwell and walk and serve, then we must deal with sin (1:5-10). We also found that love for the light means obedience to God and to God's will and to God's way (2:1-17). In the last section (2:18-29) we found that if we walk in the light, having an anointing of the Holy Spirit, we discern antichrist. Only by the illumination of God's Spirit can we be sure to recognize the many subtle approaches of antichrist. This section declares God is light, and shows that if we shall willingly and gladly walk in the light, that will mean fellowship and joy.

We know you are recalling constantly, as you study this epistle, that the great theme of it is—*Conscious Fellowship with God through Christ yields Fulness of Joy.*

In the present grand division of the book, we find the uppermost thought is—God is love; and we find

that the caption and theme-thought for this section (chapters 3 and 4) is: Loving God and man means fellowship and joy.

1 Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. 3 And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. 4 Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. 5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin. 6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him. 7 My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: 8 he that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. 11 For this is the message which ye have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another: 12 not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew

he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13 Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you. 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. 15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. 16 Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? 18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth. 19 Hereby shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before him: 20 because if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness toward God; 22 and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. 23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment. 24 And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us.—I JOHN, CHAPTER 3.

GOD'S CHILDREN LOVE HOLINESS (3:1-12)

At the opening of this chapter, John, the beloved

apostle, would arrest our thought and centre our gaze first upon the love of God for us, and then upon the reaction that such a love should certainly produce in the saved heart; namely, a love for holiness. That God should take members of a lost and stained race and bring them into the sacred circle of His own home and family, and make them "children of God" is certainly a strange and marvellous "manner" of love. We can never fathom God's heart that expressed itself in our being included in the home circle of our heavenly Father. We know that it entails privileges indescribable, sustained, sufficient and glorious. We would not forget that it also entails responsibilities, definite and exceedingly demanding. John clearly hints at this fact, declaring we must welcome alienation from the world, which is hostile to all the spirit and purpose of God, if we are to be true to the sacred demands of that sacred circle. He only pauses further long enough to tell us the consummation of this childhood, of this family fellowship. However dissimilar and in blighted contrast we may by nature stand with God, when He puts His love upon us and draws us into the family, His family, the promise is that eventually "we shall be like him."

From such a consideration, heaven-kissed, he immediately moves into the practical thought of the relationship of the regenerate heart to willing sin in the life. If a Holy God has loved us in such manner that He opened the door to the most sacred and tender relationship with Himself for us, John immediately wants us to consider what then should be our attitude toward

sin. He shows clearly that sin is lawlessness; that sin only and always works toward injury and wreckage. Sin is against light, and against love and against life. He very logically, therefore, declares in effect that if we are possessed of this hope of being like God, having been accepted into His family circle, we will love the pure and the holy. And so he declares that the born-again spirit cannot continue habitually in sin, saying in effect: "No one who continues in union with Him lives in sin: no one who lives in sin has seen Him or knows Him." He further states the inevitable, and clearly discerned truth, thus: "He who is habitually guilty of sin is a child of the devil, for the devil has been a sinner from the very beginning. The Son of God appeared for the purpose of undoing the work of the devil." The very distinguishing mark of the children of God, that clearly separates them from the devil's children, is their heart-attitude toward sin. It's a strange thing, but many Christians seem to be more afraid of "sinless perfection" than they are of "sinful imperfection."

While it is the unanimous confession of the credible saints of the ages that they do not attain sinless perfection; yet Jesus clearly commands that we are to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. We are certainly, as Christians, to hate all sin, and to forsake every known sin, and to compromise with or condone in ourselves no sin, and to believe assuredly that God has made ample provision in Christ not only for the penalty of sin but also for sin's pollution and its power. The penalty is immediately and forever dealt with

when we believe with our hearts and accept the Lord Jesus as our personal Saviour. The pollution and power are progressively dealt with as we appropriate more and more fully the life of Christ so that Paul's proclamation becomes true in us, " I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

John shows in the close of this section that sin admitted into the heart and willingly kept there declares its presence just as it did in the heart of Cain when he slew his brother, Abel.

GOD'S CHILDREN LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD (3:13-24)

The general theme, you will recall, for all of chapters 3 and 4, is: Loving God and man means fellowship and joy. In this distinctive paragraph (3:13-24) John is giving an echo from practical James about how we are to love the brethren and how we are to show that love.

As in verse 1 the author declares that we need not be surprised at the hatred of the world if our love and loyalty belong to Jesus Christ, so here he warns us against marvelling at the world's hatred, recognizing the inevitable clash. Then he positively declares that we can be sure that we have already passed out of death and have come into life if we have a heart of unselfish devotion to the brotherhood. Echoing our Saviour's declaration that hatred in the heart is murder, John reminds us that if we have hatred for a brother we thereby declare the absence of the life of

the ages in our hearts. God made it possible for us to see clearly His love for us when He laid down His life for us, and John says we ought to make this love manifest to our fellow-men by laying down our lives for the brethren. Is it possible to picture what kind of a world this would be if every Christian were controlled by such brotherly love? But practical and Spirit-guided John is not lost in the heights of the ideal. He knows men, and he knows the tendency of us to substitute for real brotherly devotion an empty lip-love. Such, he declares, is abhorrent to God and quite confusing to all men.

There are many subtle sins that seem successfully to hide themselves in the human heart; but John declares that an enlightened conscience will deal with them. With a touch of wondrous human pity he recognizes that we might be discouraged and disheartened and defeated when we discover these sins and our hearts proceed to condemn us; and who of us does not know the horror and unbearable agony of a condemning heart. John declares, however, that God is greater than our hearts, and that He knows all and will make us to know that we are His children if so be we have been born again, and that He will give us a godly repentance, which is not unto death, but which is unto renewed and deepened loyalty with a full heart-purpose, and with a whole heart-endeavour toward new obedience.

When a quickened and enlightened conscience does not condemn us, then we have boldness toward God; then we know the peace and power of answered

prayer; then we are obedient children. His commandment, which is not grievous, is that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we should love one another. When we obey these commands we continue in union with God and God continues in union with us, and through His Spirit we can be conscious of this blessed union.

Possibly we need to stir up your righteous minds, those of you who are following these studies, that you return again to the outline of the whole book, and let it grip you afresh. Especially we ask you to follow out the theme-thoughts that cover chapter 3; namely, God's children love holiness and love the brotherhood, as you patiently read the chapter again. Underneath all the study emphasized in chapters 3 and 4 is, " God is love "—and the general caption for the two chapters, you remember, as: Loving God and man means fellowship and joy.

Our next study is chapter 4, in which we find our love directed toward the truth and toward God Himself. May we ask you to read the entire epistle again before the next study, and then slowly read over chapter 4 as special preparation for Study VI?

STUDY VI

Chapter 4

In our study of chapters 3 and 4, we are following this central thought—Loving God and man means fel-

lowship and joy. We seem to find the key to this thought in the twenty-first verse of the fourth chapter, "and this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." In Study V, our last study, we found that God's children experienced a growing passion and love for holiness and a devotion to the brethren in the faith. You will remember that one of the early comments upon the Christians by the heathen of that day was, "Behold how these Christians love one another."

In this study we find that the truth and God Himself are the objects of the intelligent devotion of God's children. We will surely remember that there can be no clash between our God and any truth in His universe. We must also remember that many scientific discoveries and theories are not final and are, therefore, to be held in abeyance until the last word upon them is written, when we shall find that they will perfectly harmonize with all God's other truth. We shall also bear in mind that Jesus says (John 14:6): "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already. 4 Ye are of God, my little

children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they as of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us: 13 hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God. 16 And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. 17 Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love: but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. 19 We love,

because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen. 21 And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.—I JOHN, CHAPTER 4.

GOD'S CHILDREN KNOW AND LOVE THE TRUTH (4:1-6)

This brief paragraph declares that the Christian is given a divinely-guided discrimination. Here we see the workings of the anointing from the Holy One in order that we may know all things (2:20). The spiritually alive ones sense the difference between the Spirit of God, who does not speak of Himself but declares and manifests and glorifies Christ Jesus; and the spirit of antichrist, which is energized by the powers of darkness to defeat God's gracious message among men. It is rather striking and significant that the discriminating decision is based upon the recognition and acceptance of the incarnation of the Son of God or its denial. As we know to-day there are those who deny the existence of the flesh as reality and who, therefore, deny the physical incarnation of Jesus. This subtle error was anticipated by John centuries ago and its basic infidelity to God's revelation declared.

Here also John, illumined by the Spirit, declares that those who have been brought into fellowship with God through faith in Jesus Christ have an ear that is open to God's revelation; whereas, those who have an ear open to the world and who love the things of the world are deaf to divine deliverances. Not only this, but

John declares the ultimate victory, the sure mastery of every believer, that he is an "overcomer" because "greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." In these ways the line of demarkation is made clear between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, and God's children know and recognize and love the truth.

GOD'S CHILDREN LOVE GOD (4:7-21)

This supreme passion for God Himself is operative and underlying in God's children's love for holiness, in their love for the brotherhood, and in their knowledge of and love for the truth. Regarding this supreme passion for God Himself, which makes all other objects of our devotion secondary and contributory to our love for God, John says: "Every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love."

This love of God is manifested by His gift of Christ, His Son, that in His suffering our sins may be forgiven. This Gift of God makes His love so evident and so clear that we cannot but perceive it. If any man will stand still and look at the love of God manifested in Bethlehem, in His thirty years of going about doing good, in Gethsemane, in Calvary, in His glorious resurrection and ascension, he cannot but know God's love and His limitless longing, and His sacrifice without reservation, that lost and broken sinners might be redeemed. This love for God is expressed in our love for one another. This is spontaneous. There is something compelling about our recognition of God's love for us

and the birth in our own hearts of love back toward Him, which issues and fruits in our loving one another. "If God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. . . . If we love one another God abideth in us and His love is perfected in us." We thus declare that love is living in us by our genuine devotion to our brother.

The test of this love of God is in our confession of Christ. "Whosoever shall confess Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him and he in God, and we know and have believed the love which God hath in us (in our case). God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God abideth in him." And so we find that if we really love God, we will confess the Lord Jesus as His Son, as our Saviour, and as our Master and Lord.

This love of God is perfected when all fear has fled away, when trust is triumphant and when faith is full grown. Fear hath torment. Fear is horrible heart-anguish. If we still fear, then we have not yet been made perfect in love, for perfect love does not leave any room or place for fear. What a matchless provision this that God has made! Shall we not enter into it and let Him cast out all fear? Finally, this love of God is denied when we harbour hatred for our brother. It is idle for us to say that we love God if at the same time we are hating our brother. By thus speaking we perjure ourselves. John says: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" He cannot love God and hate his brother, for we have one command

with two indissoluble parts; namely, that we who love God are to love our brother also, and when we hate our brother we thereby declare that our love for God is insincere.

Please constantly refer to the outline of the entire epistle, and to the general theme—Conscious fellowship with God through Christ yields fulness of joy. Also bear in mind the three peak statements about God: God is light, God is love, God is life. This study which we have just closed is one concerned with the great thought—God is love.

Our next study, the seventh, is the closing study of this epistle. Please read, in preparation for it, the fifth chapter. Read it thoughtfully, noting especially verses 1, 10, 11, 12, and then, supremely, verse 13, for this is the theme-verse of the entire epistle. In it the author tells us why he wrote this charming, marvellous little book. Mark verse 20, which brings us to the climax—" Eternal Life."

STUDY VII

Chapter 5

Following the introduction, we have three major divisions of the book, as follows: II—Walking in the light means fellowship and joy—1:5–2:29—God is light; III—Loving God and man means fellowship and joy—3:1–4:21—God is love; IV—*Knowing the possession of eternal life by faith means fellowship and*

joy—5:1-21—*God is life.* This last grand division is the subject of this present study.

1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2 Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 4 For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. 5 And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? 6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. 7 And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. 8 For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one. 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son. 10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son. 11 And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.

13 These things have I written unto you, that ye

may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. 14 And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: 15 and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him. 16 If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

18 We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth himself, and the evil one toucheth him not. 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one. 20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 21 My little children, guard yourselves from idols.—I JOHN, CHAPTER 5.

THE POSSESSION OF JESUS IS NECESSARY TO THE POSSESSION OF ETERNAL LIFE (5:1-12)

A saving faith in Jesus Christ is only experienced by those who have been regenerated, that is, " begotten of God." Every believer has been begotten of God and, therefore, has God's life in him, and this life expresses itself supremely in love for Him that begat—God; and also for His only begotten Son, " only begotten " in a

unique sense—Jesus. With a marvellously deep spiritual significance God would here declare the oneness of life in Himself, in His Son, in the believer.

And this love declares its presence by our obedience to God's commandments. Here we have one of the bold and marvellous attempts at a definition of love when John declares: "This is the love of God that we keep his commandments." Thus he declares—love is obedience.

John takes a further step when he declares the certain, spiritual victory of every child of God, and he centres this thought in faith. Every believer is born, begotten of God, and every born-again one overcometh the world, and everyone that overcometh, overcometh because he is a believer. The movement seems to be, believe, be born (life possessed), overcome (life expressed). Note how John enlarges this thought of the overcomer in Revelation 2:7, 11, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21.

This Jesus, the possession of Whom is essential for our possession of eternal life, is attested in the latter part of this paragraph. Witness is borne to Him. There is a trinity of witnesses, and they are the Spirit, the blood, and the water. The Spirit is the author, and the efficient cause of our regeneration, and thus he bears witness to Jesus as the life. The blood is the instrument or the instrumental cause of our regeneration, and thus the blood bears witness to Christ as the life, for "the blood is the life." The water is the visible symbol of our regeneration, and thus it bears witness to Jesus as the life. We do well to note the close and intimate connection between the Spirit and

the water in the matter of cleansing and of regeneration, with the blood always as the instrumental cause. These witness distinctly to the life, the perfect life, the infinitely valuable life of the Lord Jesus Himself. Note this connection in John 3:5; Acts 2:1-4, 16-18, 38-41, and verse 8 here.

In great boldness now, John, moving toward a splendid climax, declares that in the presence of this attested Christ, he that believeth hath the witness in his own heart speaking to him at the centre, the sacred centre of his life. He, however, that believeth not makes God a liar. He refuses to accept the record that God has given concerning His Son. He turns down God as a witness. And then, John epitomizes the supreme interest of the race in all ages in this peerless declaration: " He that hath the Son hath the life: he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." Thus we see that the possession of Jesus is necessary to the possession of eternal life.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE POSSESSION OF ETERNAL LIFE MEANS PEACE AND POWER (5:13-17)

Here we come to the " conscious fellowship " which is the heart of the theme of the book. In this paragraph God speaks of the great privilege of assurance, the certainty of salvation. John, the Spirit-guided author of this epistle, tells us in the thirteenth verse why he wrote the book, and he says that he wrote it in order that you who " believe on the name of the Son of God . . . may know that ye have eternal life."

Fellowship with God is a sense of a common life with God; that God is in us and we are in God; that we have been born into His family, His home, His blood, His life; that we are joint-heirs with Christ. This is life eternal. This is the life of the ages. This is the abundant life, and John declares that he wrote this little epistle that men might have the peace and the power that come from a certain possession, forever finally fixed, of this eternal life.

This fellowship, this sense of common life, gives the believer great boldness in intercourse with God in prayer, in the certainty of being heard, and in the assurance of God's answer. In thus revealing to the believer his blessed privilege in prayer, John declares that there is a " sin unto death," and says, " Not concerning this do I say that he should make request." This " sin unto death " does not appear to be some special act, but a willing, habitual sinning due to a fixed heart of opposition to God and a spiritual state of confirmed antichrist.

CONCLUSION (5:18-21). THE TWO ETERNAL REALITIES

As John closes this marvellous little book, he throws up into bold relief the two supreme realities: life and death. He declares that those who are begotten of God, born of Him, who are possessed of God's life, stand out in bold contrast, unmistakably, with the world. " The world," he says, " lies lulled to sleep in the arms of the evil one." This is a profoundly moving picture of the stupor that Satan puts upon man's heart

in order that he may accomplish their eternal doom. On the other hand, God's children, His begotten ones, do not live in sin. They live beyond the fatal touch and clutch of the evil one's mighty power. They know that Messiah Jesus, the Son of God, has come. They have a divinely directed discrimination between truth and error. They are in Jesus Christ. They are consciously possessed of eternal life.

As a parting warning to his little children, his born-again, begotten ones of God the Father, John cries: "My little children, guard yourselves from idols." Guard yourselves, your hearts, against every rival for the throne, who would dispute the Lordship of your life with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Thus we close our study of this matchless, meaningful little book of five chapters. God grant that it may issue in every earnest student's being consciously possessed of the knowledge, the certainty, the assurance, of eternal life, for he wrote the book to those who believe with saving and simple trust on the name of the Son of God that they might know that they have eternal life.

VI

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

THIS BRIEF message of thirteen verses, addressed by the elder John to the elect lady and her children, bears all the evidence of being an integral part of God's divinely inspired revelation to men, and releases truths that are vitally applicable in all life to-day.

The outline of the epistle given below will make it possible for us to thread through its paths more intelligently and to carry away, not only in our minds but in our lives, its clear teaching and consequent demands.

1 The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that know the truth; 2 for the truth's sake which abideth in us, and it shall be with us for ever: 3 Grace, mercy, peace shall be with us, from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I rejoice greatly that I have found certain of thy children walking in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father. 5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote to thee a new commandment, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. 6 And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments. This

is the commandment, even as ye heard from the beginning, that ye should walk in it. 7 For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. 9 Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath God the Father and the Son. 10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: 11 for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write them with paper and ink: but I hope to come unto you, and to speak face to face, that your joy may be made full. 13 The children of thine elect sister salute thee.—II JOHN.

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

Theme: Love is obedience to truth, v. 6.

I. Introduction—The theme actuating Christian, human relations—vs. 1-3.

II. An Exhortation—Obedience to truth, which is love, brings joy—vs. 4-6.

III. A Warning—Disobedience to truth, which is antichrist, brings loss—vs. 7-11.

IV. Conclusion—Face to face fellowship means fulness of joy—vs. 12-13.

In seeking to catch the movement of this little letter

as exposed in the introduction (vs. 1-3), we find that "truth" is mentioned four times, and "love" is mentioned twice, and that truth is found to be the abiding and sufficient foundation for all right human relations; that grace, mercy, peace can be built upon it alone as the safe substructure, and that the crowning of truth as final and controlling in the life, issues in the possession of that priceless and precious thing which we call love. John, the elder, finds that following the pathways marked by truth leads him into the relation of Christian love toward those who company with him on this same course.

The heart of the letter is to be found in the exhortation (vs. 4-6), followed by the warning (vs. 7-11). The exhortation holds before us the goal of joy, which is found at the end of the pathway of obedience to the truth or a life of love. John declares that the commandment which he lays upon the elect lady and her children is not new, but one of the eternal laws of God; namely, that they should love each other and should bear and show love toward all the Christian brethren. Then he does the daring thing of defining love. Think of writing a definition of love! Only under the Spirit's inspiration could it be done; and yet, here it is: "And this is love, that we should walk after his commandments." In the first letter which John wrote (the fifth chapter and the third verse), we have the same definition given: "For this is the love of God that we should keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." We well know that the object of this love must always be twofold.

We cannot claim to love God so long as we hate our brethren. When we do this, we make God a liar. We shall never really and richly love our brethren until we have first come into that fundamental and controlling relationship with God of love to Him. So here John lifts love out of the realm of mere emotion and links it with the knowledge of the truth and the will to obey that truth. Obedience to God's revealed will, will bring us always into the true relationship with Him and with our fellow-men, and this relationship we call love, and the issue thereof is happiness of heart, " rejoicing greatly," heart-joy.

True to his former message, the Apostle John sounds a fresh and earnest warning ere he lets the ink dry upon his pen. In verses 7 to 11 he makes sparkle upon the pathway of God's children the red light of warning against the " deceivers " who are in the world, whom he characterizes as those " that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh," and whom he marks as " antichrist." He further warns that believing and following them necessitates the turning of our backs upon the truth; disobedience to the truth. This is always marked by loss and the destruction of things most precious and the sure failure to receive a full reward. John adds that those so-called Christian leaders and teachers whose lives do not dove-tail with the teaching of Christ, whatever they may have or have not, one thing is sure: such an one " hath not God." Accordingly he urges the elect lady and her children, and Christians in every age, to have no share in advancing such teaching or in their evil work.

How simple and yet how far-reaching the movement of the message here! God's truth is eternal. God has been pleased to make a revelation of His truth, which revelation is climaxed and sealed in the coming of Christ, Who declared Himself to be the Truth, as the Logos or Word of God. All real and permanent gain or loss, joy or sorrow, life or death, will be determined by the heart-attitude of men to this truth. The glorious relationship open to the humblest spirit on earth is the relationship of obedience, " for," says John, " love is obedience."

In the conclusion, John, having already described the " deceivers " and warned and exhorted the " believers," now closes the brief letter, declaring that this joy is but an earnest of what the full face-to-face fellowship shall mean in the communion of the saints, who always have in the midst of them the unseen but central personality, and " this fellowship," says John, " is marked by fulness of joy."

In the compass of these thirteen verses, John seems to be saying, God's truth, God's eternal truth, stretches out from where every soul of us stands to-day. Press the path in devoted obedience and thus live a life of love, and along this way we shall constantly find the resting-places of joy and peace placed there by God's good grace, and one day this path shall lead us where every capacity of life shall be fully satisfied. Truth obeyed is love, and life lived in love can only yield joy.

VII

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

THIS SHORT letter, containing one more verse than its sister epistle, Second John, is addressed by John, the elder, to his Christian brother and fellow-worker, Gaius. These two brief letters, one addressed to a godly woman and the other to a man of Christian character and life, are very practical and pointed in their instruction to us to-day. The thought in this third epistle seems to centre about "The Truth." This letter, as was the second epistle, was written probably about the year 90 A. D., from Ephesus by the aged beloved apostle.

We have sought to break up the epistle in its simple divisions in the analysis that we give below. These divisions are to help memory and to centre thought upon specific truths, that we may carry more of God's Word away from our study. Please refer to the outline constantly in our study of this little book.

1 The elder unto Gaius the beloved, whom I love in truth.

2 Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prosper-

eth. 3 For I rejoiced greatly, when brethren came and bare witness unto thy truth, even as thou walkest in truth. 4 Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

5 Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal; 6 who bare witness to thy love before the church: whom thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily of God: 7 because that for the sake of the Name they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers for the truth.

9 I wrote somewhat unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth and casteth them out of the church. 11 Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God. 12 Demetrius hath the witness of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, we also bear witness; and thou knowest that our witness is true.

13 I had many things to write unto thee, but I am unwilling to write them to thee with ink and pen: 14 but I hope shortly to see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be unto thee. The friends salute thee. Salute the friends by name.—III JOHN.

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

Theme: Truth is the test of the Christian life, v. 2.

I. Salutation, v. 1.

The Christian life is:

II. Walking in the truth—vs. 2-4. (Example, Gaius.)

III. Working with and for the truth—vs. 5-8. (Examples, Gaius and the brethren.)

IV. Weighed by the truth—vs. 9-12. (Examples, Diotrephes and Demetrius.)

V. Conclusion—Face-to-face Christian fellowship—vs. 13-14.

In the salutation, or introduction, John tells to whom the letter is addressed and emphasizes the intense love in which he holds the one to whom he writes. He calls him " beloved " and speaks of his affection for Gaius as thoroughly genuine, declaring that their fellowship and friendship has been cemented in the truth. Thus he marks our Master and His message as the great unfailing foundation of Christian friendship.

In this letter John tells us what the Christian life is. He first states the principle and then he gives us an example of its application. In verses 2 to 4 he says that the Christian life finds its inner source in the truth and its outward expression by our walking in the truth. He takes the beloved Gaius as an example, beautiful. Prosperity is universally desired, and John wants it for his Christian friend. He wants him to prosper in business and in health. He says,

however, that this prosperity should be safeguarded and controlled by our spiritual prosperity. He strongly hints that it is a tragedy for men to prosper financially or in fame and honour, or in knowledge and power, out of proportion to their spiritual prosperity and growth. Lacking the levelling control and governing power of a roundly developed spiritual life, which constantly keeps first things first, our prosperity and success gets all life out of line and renders our lives lopsided. Only as we enthrone the truth and the Author of the truth can we safely handle the greater trusts that God commits to His children.

Walking in the truth means joy in the heart. When one walks in the truth his unconscious influence is noted by those who witness him and they declare he is truth-governed. John here opens up his heart, clearly indicating that Gaius is one of his spiritual children, one whom he had been used to bring into the knowledge and salvation of the truth. He declares that there is no joy so supreme and satisfying in his heart as the evidence that His spiritual children are walking in the truth. The privilege of spiritual parenthood belongs to every Christian. Are we exercising the privilege that we, too, may have this deep and blessed joy?

In the second division of this letter, embracing verses 5 to 8, we find the author pointing out the practical issue of the truth enthroned in the heart. Here he declares that the Christian life is working with and for the truth, and again he uses Gaius as an example, together with the brethren. It is a tender

touch that he places the emphasis not upon brilliant or spectacular work but upon "faithful" work, and this door is open to every believer. We are working for and with the truth when we faithfully fulfil the claims of God's Spirit in our housework, in our routine church service and work, in our Sunday School class, and in all of life's daily duties done under His approving eye and hand. John here marks hospitality as a Christian virtue. Surely God does give homes to His children that they may use them to set forward on their journey those who are fellow-believers in and with the truth.

With deft fingers the author picks out the great motive that pulsed steadily in the heart of the early Church and that must pulse in the heart of any church that will truly witness: "For the sake of the Name." "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." God hath given Him "a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess to the glory of God." And the Christian's mark in heaven is declared: "His name shall be on their foreheads." For the sake of Jesus the Saviour, God in the flesh, telling and portraying the love of God for lost men; for His sake the lovers of the truth can still afford to go forth, suffering loss but bearing a good witness. "For the sake of the Name" is a great heart-motto. Try it out in sorrow, darkness, and times of testing and temptation and when it is costly to witness-bear.

Having thus given us the matchless motive, "the Name," he proceeds to describe the incomparable task:

Being " fellow-workers with and for the truth." The truth is our ally, our light, our strength, our courage and wisdom, and our exceeding great reward. As fellow-workers for the truth, we work for the acceptance of the truth, the establishment of the truth, the lordship of the truth, and the glory of the truth. All that is accomplished by workers with and for the truth shall endure, for truth is final and eternal.

In the last division of the letter John tells us that the Christian life is weighed by the truth—vs. 9-12. Some go up and some go down. Just as an X-ray reveals the hidden things, the inner controlling realities, so the truth reveals the inner realities of the heart and life. The truth declares Diotrephes to be prideful, exclusive toward the brethren, hindering Christian work, disrupting the Church, not to be imitated, one who has never clearly seen God because his eyes were on Diotrephes.

What a warning for those of us who love to have the pre-eminence in church and Sunday School and in Christian service! We forget the majesty of God. We forget John the Baptist's dedication: " He must increase, but I must decrease." We forget that there is One for Whom that place is reserved and that it shall be our passion that in all things " Christ might have the pre-eminence." When self usurps the Saviour's place anarchy, chaos, and ruin issue.

This same spotlight truth also declares Demetrius. What a contrast! Demetrius is also a poor human sinner. How can he stand safely in the spotlight of the truth? He has a Substitute, Christ. He has an

Advocate, Christ. He has a Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. He has a righteousness in which he stands perfect,—Christ's own righteousness reckoned to him. And thus, marvel of marvels, truth in all of its revealing power will only bring joy and comfort and glory and peace to those whose lives are hid with Christ in God. Thus we see the truth weighs and witnesses and foundations and confirms the real Christian. Such a life, and only such a life, can face without fear the fact that God is light.

In the conclusion, verses 13-14, there is the same tender touch that we find in the Second Epistle, a longing to see his friend face to face, a passion for Christian fellowship, a yearning for a foretaste of heaven. In the meantime, he speaks peace to Gaius and to the friends with him. How beautiful and how true it is that where truth reigns there peace abides!

VIII

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

THERE IS a striking modesty about the author of this brief epistle which charms us and charges the book with unwonted power. He speaks of himself as the bond-slave of Jesus Christ, and as the brother of James, who was the author of the book of James. He does not mention the marvellous fact that, on the human level, he was the brother of Jesus, the natural brother of our Lord. The divine lordship of Jesus lifted Him into the place of Saviour and Master for even His human brothers who were slow to believe on Him. The reverence and awe in which they held Him and the unmeasured devotion and worship which they accorded Him are subtle testimonies to His matchless Deity.

This little letter, written about the year 66, was demanded by the perils that were threatening the Church of Christ from within. At the time of the writing of the Epistle of James, the persecution was from without, but now the faith itself is in danger of becoming corrupted and its power vitiated and lost by the false and untrue spirits, who have arrayed themselves within the fortifications of the Gospel and are

determined upon its destruction from within. This is the critical and compelling need which this epistle seeks to meet.

The epistle speaks clearly of a once-for-all-delivered faith, thus evidencing the finality of the faith and the revelation. It thereby seems to declare that in the spiritual realm God has done a complete thing in the incarnation of Jesus, His life and death and resurrection and ascension. Concerning Him He has given the revelation contained in the holy Scriptures; and as John calls down a curse upon those who add to or take from the book of the Revelation (Revelation 22:18, 19), so we believe the same principle is applicable to those in Jude's day or in our day, who attempt to amend or curtail the once-for-all-delivered faith.

Concerning this revealed faith Jude declares that it has been heard and understood, believed, lived, rested upon, proclaimed and thereby perpetuated.

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ: 2 Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.

3 Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. 4 For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into las-

civiousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

5 Now I desire to put you in remembrance, though ye know all things once for all, that the Lord, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. 6 And angels that kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, having in like manner with these given themselves over to fornication and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire. 8 Yet in like manner these also in their dreamings defile the flesh, and set at nought dominion, and rail at dignities. 9 But Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. 10 But these rail at whatsoever things they know not: and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they destroyed. 11 Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. 12 These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts when they feast with you, shepherds that without fear feed themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; 13 wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved for ever. 14 And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophe-

sied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousand of his holy ones, 15 to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. 16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their lusts (and their mouth speaketh great swelling words), showing respect of persons for the sake of advantage.

17 But ye, beloved, remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 that they said to you, In the last time there shall be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These are they who make separations, sensual, having not the Spirit. 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. 22 And on some have mercy, who are in doubt; 23 and some save, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, 25 to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore. Amen.—JUDE.

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

Theme: The Pure Faith Must Be Preserved and Petpetuated, v. 3.

I. Salutation—the author and those addressed—vs. 1, 2.

II. The Challenge—when the pure faith is threatened—vs. 3, 4.

III. The Ruin—when the pure faith is denied—vs. 5-16.

IV. The Obligation—when the pure faith is preserved and perpetuated—vs. 17-23.

V. Conclusion and Benediction—vs. 24, 25.

"The faith" is the totality of Christianity. The faith is bodied forth in Christ and is only sustained by connection with Him; a connection which is willing, vital and controlling. God has revealed Himself in nature, in the Word written and in the Word made flesh and dwelling among us. This revelation we receive by faith and the continuance and growth of that faith mark every step of the Christian life and its expansion.

I. SALUTATION (VERSES 1, 2)

In this brief compass of two verses, Jude tells us who he is, to whom he writes and what he expects to be the issue in their hearts from his writing. He identifies himself as the brother of James. He does not call himself the brother of Jesus but takes the place as His bond-servant, and declares that he, the bond-servant of Christ, is writing to those who are the called-out ones of God and who are beloved ones of God, because they have answered that call, and who are kept for Jesus Christ. This epistle is to the kept-ones, with an

appeal that they shall keep the faith. With prophetic confidence, he declares that God's mercy and God's peace and abounding love will be multiplied in every life exercised by God's message into faithful and courageous devotion.

II. THE CHALLENGE—WHEN THE PURE FAITH IS THREATENED (VERSES 3, 4)

Jude seems to have had other plans when he thought of writing this letter, but, of course, his plans were subject to change at the notice of God's Spirit. In view of the needs of the Kingdom of Christ, and apprehending as he does the sinister presence of the ungodly in the Church who have crept in at some unguarded place and who are being listened to and followed, he is constrained to declare a message that shall meet with boldness the movements that threaten the pure faith.

This situation is not one that has startled or overwhelmed in any wise Jude, for such has been foretold of old. Men who are ungodly, whether they are in or out of the Church, will pervert grace into lasciviousness because they deny the only Master and Lord, our Saviour Jesus Christ. In denying the only Master they thereby abandon and lose the only medicine for their desperate spiritual malady and their fatal corruption becomes contagious. All the claims of such that they believe in Christ are denied by the fact that they live after the walk of the evil one, and those who are separated unto Christ need never expect any spiritual help from the camp of Satan.

The faith has been delivered to the saints, that the saints may preserve the faith and perpetuate it. If we are to contend earnestly for the faith, it must be done by lives that are lived on the uplands with Christ, for thus only can we give an unanswerable argument for the reality of the faith.

III. THE RUIN—WHEN THE PURE FAITH IS DENIED (VERSES 5-16)

The pathway of the revelation is strewn with the wreckage caused by selfishness and sin. Those delivered from Egypt were destroyed in the wilderness because "They believed not"—no faith. And the rebellious angels, together with the Sodomites, are set forth as examples of the ruin wrought by rebellion against God and the yielding to the mastery of the flesh. These are set forth as our examples and as a warning.

The defilement of pride, which pits itself against the Infinite and Holy One, is pictured in all of its degradation. Cain, Balaam and Korah, in drab procession, are pictured before the minds of the reader as those who defied God and perished. Jude projects, then, in terms of bleak and grim description, the ruin. This ruin is like hidden rocks upon a ship's course; a heartless shepherd selfishly neglecting his sheep; waterless, wandering clouds that bring no rain; fruitless trees that feed no hungering mouth; aimless waves that go nowhere; lost stars that inhabit darkness forever. These describe the ruin that comes from disregarded warning.

IV. THE OBLIGATION—WHEN THE PURE FAITH IS PRESERVED AND PERPETUATED (VERSES 17-23)

For its preservation and perpetuation, we must heed the warnings that God has given us. He has sought to prepare us against the mockers, who in the last time shall walk after their own ungodly lusts. He urges upon every believer and faithful follower that he shall keep himself in the love of God, by refusing and opposing those who are sensual and who have not the Spirit of God; also by building himself and his life upon this most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; and looking with confident hope and expectation for the mercy of Christ perfected unto eternal life.

Regarding those who are lost there will be a burning and tender passion in the heart of the keepers of the faith that they may be saved; that they may be snatched from the fire of destruction; that even though we may hate and loathe their garments spotted by the flesh, we shall love their souls and long to lead them out of darkness into light. Thus shall those be marked who fulfil the obligation of preserving and perpetuating the faith.

V. CONCLUSION AND BENEDICTION

And what a benediction it is! Herein Christ is declared as " the keeper of those who keep the faith," as " able to guard " them and to set them before the presence of His glory with every blemish removed and their spirits vibrant with heavenly joy, as they unite their souls in praise with all the other redeemed creation,

giving glory and majesty and dominion and power before all time and now and forevermore, unto the only wise God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Lord. May our spirits echo the loud " Amen."

This little book, boldly portraying the tragedies of unfaithfulness and sin, sounds a warning that every immortal soul should heed. It also holds aloft a hope that can satisfy the deeper capacities of every spirit.

May we request afresh that you read this book and re-read it, referring constantly to the outline and the suggestive comments given above? Surely we live in a day when the once-for-all-delivered faith is being questioned, attacked, traduced and in many areas eclipsed and lost. Shall we not, as true believers, be numbered among those who have this faith, and who for its preservation and perpetuation, contend earnestly against every form of apostasy!

Printed in the United States of America

F. B. MEYER, D.D.

The Call and Challenge of the Unseen — $1.75

Ever since the days of his successful ministry in Leicester, Englnd, Dr. Meyer has held a unique place in the esteem of his 'fellow-countrymen, as well as Christians in America and elsewhere, who have adopted him for their own. These chapters epitomize many of the truths which have constituted his testimony in many lands.

T. C. HORTON, D.D.

The Potency of Prayer

A Handbook on Prayer for the Everyday Christian. $1.75

A book on how to pray, is reverent, devout, and eminently practical. Realizing the importance of a constant contact with the forces of power which prayer affords, Dr. Horton, Superintendent Emeritus of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, sets forth man's need of prayer, and the most potent means of satisfying it.

HERMAN PAUL GUHSE

A Book of Invocations for Use Throughout the Year

Introduction by Harry Emerson Fosdick. $1.00

Scores of Invocation prayers for use in Church services, Sunday Schools, missionary meetings and other Christian gatherings.

"The prayers all breathe a spirit of true devotion, and are couched in choice language. They will serve as an aid either in public services or in private devotions."—*Record of Christian Work.*

BYRON HOOVER DeMENT, D.D., LL.D.

The Bible Readers' Life of Christ — $2.50

An interpretative account of the words and works of Jesus based on the Gospel harmony. This simply expressed, comprehensive and yet concise work is of extreme value to theological seminaries, Bible Institutes, Sunday Schools and other institutions needing a clear and connected Life of Christ.

BIBLICAL HISTORY

IRA MAURICE PRICE, Ph.D.

The Dramatic Story of Old Testament History

Profusely Illustrated, many maps. **$3.50**

Though it covers the whole period, it is not an outline, or a mere syllabus like Dr. Price's former work in this field; it is a recital, a graphic survey of events, movements, and persons from Adam to Alexander and from Cain to Judas Maccabæus.

ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD, D.D.

Bible History: Genesis to Esther

Popular Studies in the Old Testament.
With Ten Pages of Charts, **$1.50**

A concise popular interpretation of the narrative books of the Old Testament. Like its companion volume, "The Prophets: Elijah to Christ," it reveals the freshness, vitality and eternal values of Old Testament literature.

RELIGIOUS BIOGRAPHY

HENRY KALLOCH ROWE, Ph.D.

Modern Pathfinders of Christianity

The Lives and Deeds of Seven Centuries of Christian Leaders. **$2.00**

Stories of such men as Francis of Assisi, John Calvin, John Wesley, Moody, Rauschenbusch and sixteen others, are told in vivid, informing and stimulating manner. Teachers, pastors and all people interested in religious education will find these lives of interest and inspiration.

THE MOSLEM PROBLEM

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER, F.R.G.S.

Across the World of Islam

Aspects of the Mohammedan Faith and the Awakening of the Moslem Multitudes.
Abundantly Illustrated, **$4.00**

Story, tragedy and problem as witnessed by Dr. Zwemer from Cairo to Casablanca; from Capetown to Calcutta—the fascination, desperate need and marvellous awakening life of Islam on almost every continent. For travel, missionary or general religious interest, of marked and timely significance.

BIBLE CHARACTER STORIES

WILLIAM FORD MANLEY

Bible Dramas

Radio Dramalogues adopted for Church and Social Gatherings. **$2.00**

These plays based on Bible characters, successfully produced over the radio, are now offered to Churches, societies and fraternal organizations for amateur production. The "Production Suggestions" are simple and clear, and are just what is needed to make the presentation of each play a delight to the characters and to the audience. The dramas are quite out of the ordinary; they contrive to get far beneath the surface, and uncover depths of motive, of atmosphere and of dramatic and spiritual power.

WILLIAM J. MAY

Bible Character Stories

Illustrated, **$1.75**

Here is the human side of the leading characters of the older Bible stories. From "The Beginnings of Human Nature" in the Garden of Eden to the time when Moses, afront the Promised Land, faced the God from whom he never more was to part, Dr. May's volume of Bible tales consistently clarifies and illumines the human faults and fancies, ambitions and achievements of Bible men and women.

LIFE OF PAUL

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, D.D.

Paul the Man

His Life, Message and Ministry. **$2.00**

Dr. Macartney writes of St. Paul as only an earnest, sympathetic friend could picture him. He shows the apostle as a man among men, quick to understand and deal with every situation. Dr. Macartney has an intimate, convincing manner of presentation. As one reviewer recently said: "His pen seems to be a plough running deep furrows through the soil of historic records; again it is an instrument of illumination, lighting up areas that have before lain in the shadow."

JAMES I. VANCE, D.D.

Author of "God's Open," "Being a Preacher," Etc.

Love Trails of the Long Ago

Love Stories of Bible Men and Women. $1.50

Some of the subjects introduced are Vashti, Eve, Zipporah, Jephthæ, Rebekah, David, Delilah and Mary of Bethlehem, and the supreme love between Jesus and all mankind. Here is an exceedingly attractive gift book, and it is also full of suggestive value to preachers, as well as to Bible readers generally.

WILLIAM P. MERRILL, D.D.

Pastor, Brick Presbyterian Church, New York

Prophets of the Dawn

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah. The Beginnings of the Religion of the Spirit. $1.50

A thoughtful and illuminating interpretation. Dr. Merrill has succeeded in making the critical Eighth Century B. C. real and full of suggestions to the crucial Twentieth Century A. D. Here is an unusually appealing volume for layman and minister alike. It is not mere history nor yet exegesis; it is rather an interpretation, invigorated by a vivid but restrained imagination that puts new vitality into the present-day understanding of Old Testament times.

ELMER E. HELMS, D.D.

Men Who Made and Marred History

Studies in Biblical Biography. $1.25

Dr. Helms' wide experience of life, of human nature and of the Bible gained during this long, varied and vigorous ministry, is abundantly reflected in these essays and addresses on great men of Bible days. "The Man Who Gave Us a Start" is Adam, of course, but who is "The Incorruptible Man," or "The Man of Iron," or "A Crooked Man Made Straight"? The series closes appropriately and glowingly with "The Man Pre-Eminent" —Jesus of Nazareth. The volume is one of power and inspiration for every Bible reader and student—minister or layman.

A NEW EDITION

AGNES SLIGH TURNBULL

Far Above Rubies

Heart Stories of Bible Women.

Second Edition. Illustrated, $2.00

Chicago Evening Post: "Here at last are Bible women revealed through the sympathetic, creative imagination of a woman, who with great dramatic sense lifts one out of the present into Bethsaida and Capernaum."

BS2777
.G5
AUTHOR Glasgow, S. M.
TITLE The general epistles.

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME
SEP 6 1956	Wolhstein Bird
JAN 8 '58	Arthur Mc
FEB 3 '60	Ray Avis
NOV 1 '60	Wall
NOV 8 '61	
DEC 13 '61	
JAN	
FE	

BS
2777
.G5

.O IN U. S. A.